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MATRILINEAL KINSHIP

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[title page]

Nayar: Central Kerala

101 564 The Nayars, unlike the groups so far described, form only a part-society—a named category of castes within the social system of south-
[121] west India. An account of their kinship system therefore requires a
sketch of the political and economic system in which they were embedded. It seems to have been the Nayars' role as a specialized occupational group within a complex society which accounted for the most unusual features of their kinship institutions.

101 The Nayars differ also from the other groups considered with re-
564 gard to their relatively high level of technological development. At
463 least from the first century A.D., Kerala's social structure was based
241 upon plough agriculture with irrigation, specialized crafts, and over-
433 seas trade (K. M. Panikkar, 1945: 36). Productivity was sufficiently
[439] high so that more than one-quarter of the population could be exempted from manual labor and set apart as specialist, literate groups engaged in religion, government, warfare, and wholesale trade. The
[162] Nayars, as the ruling and military castes, formed the core of this aristocracy and probably comprised between one-quarter and one-fifth of the total population.[1]

611 Partly as a result of direct legal changes brought about since the
178 British conquest of 1792, and, more deeply, as a result of the change
177 to an industrial fuel technology, the Nayar system of matrilineal groups has been gradually disintegrating over the past hundred years. Some of the traditional functions of these matrilineal units are being taken over by the elementary family and by the wider, personal, bilateral kindred of each individual. Other former functions of matrilineal groups have passed to such modern bureaucratic institutions as
121 government, army, law court, and school. Because this book is a com-
611 parative study of matrilineal systems, I shall concentrate on Nayar lineages and kinship in the "traditional" period before the British

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[161] [1] Buchanan estimated the population density of Central Kerala at 100 per square mile in 1800 (1807, II: 501). The density for Cochin State was 814 per square mile in 1931 (Census of India, Cochin State, 1931).

conquests; that is, from 1342, the date of the first useful Arabic ac- 121
count (Gibb, 1929) to the end of the eighteenth century. My sources 611
include English translations of the writings of Arab, Italian, Portu- [127
guese, Dutch, and French visitors to Kerala, works by English travel-
ers, government servants, historians, and anthropologists, and a few
historical works by Indian scholars who make use of indigenous Mal-
ayalam and Sanskrit documents.

Modern changes in Nayar kinship are not evenly distributed 178
throughout the population. Some of the traditional institutions and 184
relationships persist, especially in villages most remote from the seats
of government and from modern market centers. Many other tradi- 124
tional usages are remembered by older people. Because of this, my
own field work in three villages of Kerala—between November, 1947 114
and July, 1949—was able to provide me with the organizational frame-
work into which to fit the literary material, and supplied me with
many details on the traditional system not hitherto published.[2] Some 12
information was also gleaned from genealogies, manuscript histories 12
of particular lineages, and translations of Malayalam documents re-
lating to land tenure, property transactions, and religious rites.

Modern changes in Nayar kinship comprise a large subject, which 11
I have already briefly treated elsewhere (Gough, 1952*a;* see also Rao, 17
1957: 74–142). A full account will appear in a forthcoming book.

Ecology

Kerala, or the Malabar Coast, lies in the extreme southwest of India 137
beside the Arabian Sea. The coastline is some 360 miles long, the area 13
about 14,908 square miles. It is divided from the rest of South India
by the Western Ghats, a mountain wall broken only in the center by
the Palghat Gap. From prehistoric to modern times, migrations took 16
place from the eastern plateau of peninsular India into the coastal re- 133
gion, but until the coming of modern transport the mountains pre-
vented continuous contacts between the people who became estab-
lished there and their neighbors to the east. On the other hand, its 17
position laid Kerala open to contacts by sea with many peoples, in-
cluding Jews and Arabs (from perhaps 800 B.C.), Egyptians and
Phoenicians (ca. fifth century B.C.), Romans (first century A.D.), Chi-

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[2] My field work in three villages of Central and North Kerala was made possible by the grant of a William Wyse Studentship from Trinity College, Cambridge, and of an Anthony Wilkin Studentship from the Faculty of Archaeology and Anthropology, University of Cambridge. The preparation and writing of these chapters have been carried out with the aid of two grants from the Social Science Research Council, in 1954 and 1958. [12

177 nese (from at least the sixth century) and after 1498 the Portuguese,
followed by the English, Dutch, and French (Logan, 1951, I: 251–254,
258, 294–399).

133 The coast falls roughly into three natural divisions: the coastal strip,
the midlands, and the highlands rising into the Ghats (cf. Buchanan,
[245] 1807: 565–566). The coastal strip is flat and sandy. Its chief product
is coconuts, with some rice and bananas. In the southern half it is
[243] broken by salt-water lagoons which for over a hundred miles form a
continuous navigable chain parallel to the sea. Most of the chief
361 towns are situated on the coast, divided by chains of little fishing villages.
[487] Many of the coast towns are ancient, and most of them lie at
the mouths of navigable rivers which flow westward from the Ghats.
[439] From time immemorial raw materials, chiefly pepper, were brought
by boat from the inland hillsides for shipment from these ports.

133 The midlands comprise low hills and fertile valleys. Broad strips of
alluvial rice lands lie in the valleys, thinning out as the land rises
245 into the foothills of the Ghats. On the hill slopes are gardens of coconut
palms, bananas, pepper, ginger, and many fruit trees such as
[439] jack and mango. It was probably wild pepper which was exported in
Roman times, but pepper and other spices have been deliberately
[177] cultivated at least since 1290 (Ricci, 1931: 326). Cashew nuts, introduced
by the Portuguese, formed an additional export crop. Small
361 merchant settlements, market-centers, and the military fortifications of
443 petty chiefs existed at strategic points on river banks. Some of these
centers grew into bazaar towns in the nineteenth century. But the
mass of the population traditionally lived, as today, in scattered village
communities on garden land surrounding or surrounded by fields
243 of wet rice, the main subsistence crop. Wet-rice cultivation depended
231 on plough agriculture with teams of oxen or water buffalo. Goats and
chickens were the other significant domestic animals.

361 The highlands rising into the Ghats were covered mainly by deciduous
forests. The foothills, interspersed with occasional rice flats,
[133] were sparsely populated by people of the same cultural groups as
those in the plains. They eked out their wet-rice cultivation with garden
[241] crops of fruits, spices, and vegetables, with shifting hoe cultivation
[224] of dry grains on hillsides, and with forest hunting of elephant,
deer, and pig. Higher in the mountains lived primitive tribes of hunters
and shifting cultivators, having only occasional contacts with the
kingdoms of the plains.

132 Throughout most of the area Kerala's rainfall varies between 75
and 170 inches, being heaviest in the north where the mountains are

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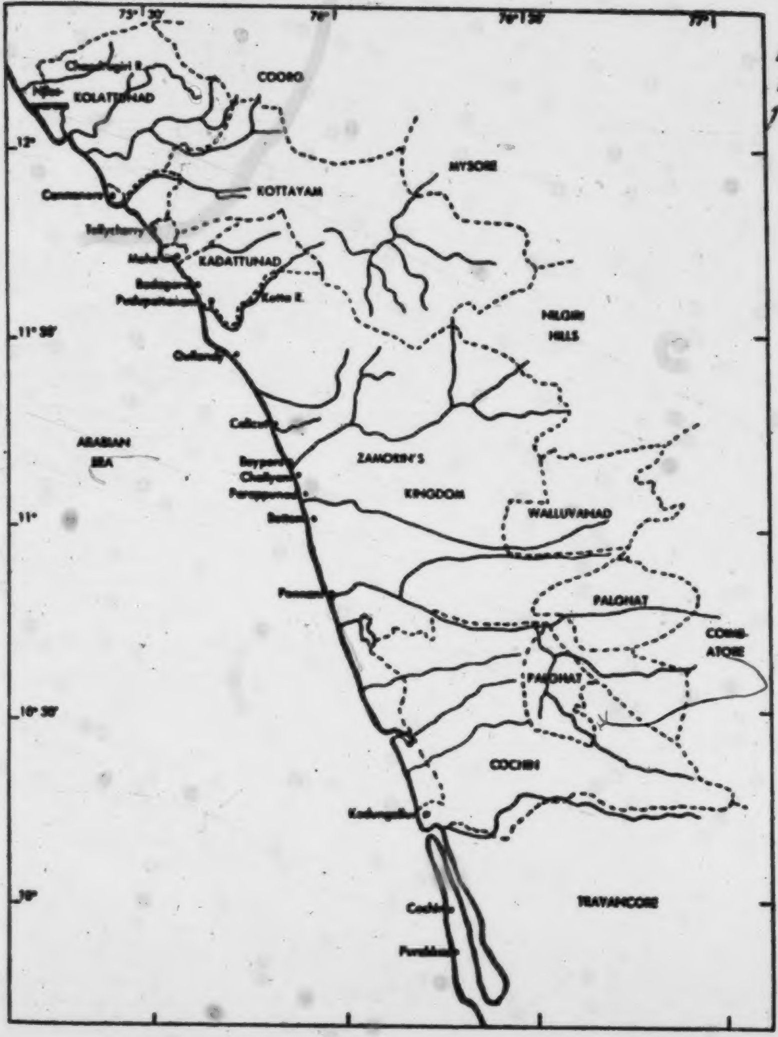
75° 30'
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Chandragiri R.
Nileshwaram
KOLATTUNAD
COORG
MYSORE
Cannanore
KOTTAYAM
Tellicherry
Mahe
KADATTUNAD
Badagara
Pudupattanam
Kotta R.
NILGIRI
HILLS
Quilandy
Calicut
ARABIAN
SEA
Beypore
Chaliyam
Parappanangadi
Bettem
ZAMORIN'S
KINGDOM
WALLUVANAD
Ponnani
PALGHAT
COIMB-
ATORE
PALGHAT
COCHIN
Kodungallur
Cochin
Purakkad
TRAVANCORE

Fig. 6-1. Rough boundaries of the Kingdoms of Central and North Kerala in the mid-eighteenth century. (Adapted from C. A. Innes, 1908: 44–45.)

[p. 301]

132 nearer to the sea (Innes, 1908: 270). The temperature varies from 70°
to 90° and humidity is always high. Unlike most of the great kingdoms
[133] of India, Kerala had no single great river and no extensive, centrally
[241] organized irrigation system. Instead, her cultivated crops and
lush vegetation depended on the heavy rainfall and numerous small
rivers and streams by means of which small-scale irrigation was easily
possible to groups of families.

132 Further, the heavy rainfall, seasonal floods, and hilly terrain made
49 communications difficult until modern times. Before the partial conquest
[648] of Kerala by Mysoreans from the northeast in 1766, there were
no roads, wheeled vehicles, or pack animals. The kings maintained
[701] small cavalry forces only in the coast towns, traveled in palanquins,
[203] and employed runners to carry messages to their vassal chiefs. Goods
[482] were dragged downstream by elephants, transported in boats, or carried
on the backs of men. Armies moved slowly; local nobles sometimes
[505] rebelled against their rulers but warfare was abandoned in the
[726] heavy southwest monsoon season from May to September. The difficulty
of communications and the lack of a centrally organized irrigation
651 system may have been connected with the fact that Kerala
had no regular land tax until the 1730's (*ibid.*: 308). Instead, the revenues
of her rulers came from tribute in kind supplied by subordinate
nobles, and from taxes levied upon overseas trade (Logan, 1951, II:
ccxviii; Innes, 1908: 307–308).

439 In spite of the overseas trade, most of Kerala's villages were traditionally
472 self-sufficient for the basic necessities of life. Quantities of
563 manufactured goods were brought to Kerala's ports from other parts
of India for shipment to the Middle East, but indigenous crafts such
as weaving, metalwork, pottery, and basketry remained simple and
served local needs. Kerala thus had no large urban castes of craftsmen
and no indigenous merchant castes, but only immigrant communities
of Syrian Christian, Jewish, Muslim, and, later, European merchants
and Hindu merchants from other kingdoms of India, all concentrated
in the coastal towns. The limited nature of trade and crafts and the
comparative self-sufficiency of village life also help to account for
the relatively decentralized political structure.

History

175 Little is known of Kerala until the first century A.D. It then formed
part of the kingdom of Chera, whose capital was probably east of the
Ghats at Karur on the Kaveri River in the modern Trichinopoly district.
[437] Chera, like its companion South Indian kingdoms, Chola and

Pandya, appears to have grown powerful on the basis of trade with 175
Rome. Like Chola and Pandya, it was a Tamil kingdom; Malayalam, [439]
the modern language of Kerala, did not diverge from Tamil until [197]
about the tenth century (Sastri, 1955: 400). It is clear from the Tamil
literature of the Sangam period that the basic features of Kerala's [174]
division of labor, caste system and village organization, must have developed during or before the Chera period (*ibid.*: 110–140). The three South Indian kingdoms temporarily disintegrated in the late third century, probably as a result of a sharp decline in Roman trade.

There is no mention of any matrilineal caste like the Nayars in the 174
Chera kingdom. When and whence they came is uncertain. The most 101
plausible suggestion is that during the Chera period they were a matrilineal hill tribe occupying the Ghats under chiefs who owed a ten- 564
uous allegiance to the Chera kings. They may have descended to the Kerala plains as invading barbarians about the fourth century, when the Chera kingdom collapsed (Ayyar, 1938: 43). Little is known of Kerala between the Chera period and the thirteenth century. All or a part of it passed under the rule of a succession of viceroys (Perumals) from various South Indian kingdoms to the east of the Ghats. The date of the last Perumal is quite uncertain. Many writers concur in placing him in the early ninth century, but he may possibly have lived as late as the thirteenth. Nayar chiefs and Nayar soldiers are first 175
mentioned in three copperplate inscriptions, tentatively dated late 701
seventh, mid-eighth, and early ninth centuries. The inscriptions record 648
grants of land and judicial privileges on the coast to settlements of Jewish and Syrian Christian traders (Logan, 1887, I: 265). The grants were made by rulers of Kerala, presumably Perumals, and were witnessed by Nayar chiefs of Venad, Ernad, Walluvanad, and Palghat. All these districts were famous Nayar chiefdoms in the later periods and persisted until the eighteenth century. The plates suggest that Nayar chiefs with private armies had emerged as vassals of the Perumals at least by the ninth century. By the mid-thirteenth century, at the latest, the greater Nayar chiefs had become independent small kings, and the Perumals had disappeared.

Chinese had resumed trade with Kerala sometime in the Perumal 175
period, and in the thirteenth century this trade greatly expanded un- 439
der the empire of Kubla Khan. Concomitantly, two coastal Nayar 635
chiefdoms with strategic ports expanded into small kingdoms by conquering the surrounding inland chiefdoms and monopolizing their trade. In the north was the Kolattiri kingdom centered about Mount Eli, and in the south the kingdom of Travancore or Venad, centered

175 about Quilon (Ricci, 1931: 326–330; Logan, 1951, I: 282–283). Chinese
439 trade declined in the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries,
635 but that of Muslim Arabs (who had visited the coast from the eighth
century) greatly increased. In the fourteenth century a third Nayar kingdom around Calicut, in the center of the coast, had expanded with the help of Arab merchants (Major, 1857: 13–18). By the time the Portuguese arrived, in 1498, Calicut practically monopolized the Arab trade, and the Zamorin (king) of Calicut held overlordship from Pudupattanam south to Porakkad (Logan, 1951, I: 293–294; Ayyar, 1938: 273, 291). Trickles of trade continued in Kolattunad and Travancore, but the kings there had grown weak by comparison with the Zamorin. Kolattunad had become divided into three virtually independent little kingdoms, and the Travancore ruler had surrendered large powers to the subordinate local chiefs of his realm. Two other small kingdoms remained independent in the interior to the east of Calicut: Walluvanad and Palghat.

The period 1498 to 1792 was one of bitter struggle between Euro-
175 pean and Middle Eastern powers, who formed shifting alliances with
439 native rulers for control of the pepper trade. By 1600 the Portuguese
648 had practically abolished the Arab trade, but they were themselves
driven from the coast by the Dutch in 1663. The English reached Kerala in 1615 and the French in 1725. Each European trading power allied itself with one or another Nayar ruler and took part in successive battles until, in 1766, the northern half of the coast was overrun by Muslim armies from Mysore to the northeast. The Mysorean occupation ended in 1792 with the settlement of the whole area by the English East India Company and the establishment of the British bureaucratic political system (Logan, 1951, I: 404–473).

175 Shortly before the Mysorean invasions Kerala was divided into nine
648 small kingdoms and a number of border chiefdoms owing only tenuous
allegiance to some king. The British after 1792 amalgamated
635 the seven northern kingdoms (Kolattunad, Kottayam, Kurumbranad,
Kadattunad, Calicut, Walluvanad, and Palghat) to form the Malabar District of Madras Province, pensioned their rulers, and brought them under a British district officer responsible to the government of Madras. Cochin, a small kingdom in the center of the coast, remained a native state under its own ruler subject to the advice of a British Resident. So also did the southernmost kingdom of Travancore, whose ruler had already in the 1730's established a standing army, dispossessed his Nayar nobles, and formed a bureaucratic government. Kerala remained divided in this way until after the in-

dependence of India in 1947. Cochin and Travancore were amalgamated in 1949 and, under popular pressure for the formation of linguistic states, the whole area was reunited as the State of Kerala in 1956. This state elected a Communist government in 1957. 175 648 635

After 1498 there were certain changes in Kerala's economy. Trade and towns expanded, gunpowder was introduced and wars became more devastating, and cash transactions became more prevalent among the aristocratic castes in villages (K. M. Panikkar, 1929: chap. XIV). But the basic form of the caste system and the pyramidal system of kingdoms, subordinate chiefdoms, and villages persisted with little change until after the Mysorean conquest. The Calicut kingdom gradually declined after 1498, for the Portuguese allied themselves with the small kingdom of Cochin to the south, freed it from Calicut's overlordship, and used it as a base from which to expel the Arabs and subdue the Zamorins. Nevertheless, with fluctuating boundaries Calicut remained the most powerful kingdom until the 1730's. [177] [436] [564] [631]

Although its internal political boundaries have shifted continually, Kerala is today still divisible into three major cultural areas. These are distinguished by differences in the names and numbers of the castes who occupy them, in dress, dietetic habits and ritual practices, and in the kinship systems of the several Hindu castes. The northern area, north of the Kora River, comprises the former kingdoms of Nileswaram, Kolattunad, Kottayam, and Kadattunad. This was the area dominated by the Kolattiri kings in the fourteenth century and at various periods thereafter. In British times it became the northern part of Malabar District and the southern part of South Canara District; I shall call it North Kerala. The central area comprises the former kingdoms of Calicut, Walluvanad, Palghat, and Cochin. It was overrun by the Zamorins of Calicut at various times between the fourteenth and eighteenth centuries. In British times it formed South Malabar District and Cochin State; I shall refer to it as Central Kerala. All the southern area (until recently, Travancore State) was at one time or another subordinate to the kings of Travancore. The political systems—and consequently the internal caste divisions of the Nayars and the forms of their kinship systems—differed in these three areas. Much confusion has arisen in the past because of failure to distinguish between the three regions. It has been assumed that the Nayars had one kinship system, whereas in fact they had three, with different terminological structures. In this paper I describe Nayar kinship in two kingdoms of Central Kerala: Calicut and Cochin. 631 635 184 [564] [601] [121]

Caste and Territorial Divisions

THE HIGH CASTES

564 *The Nambudiri Brahmans* Throughout Kerala the Nambudiri Brahmans were the highest Hindu caste and the ritual and scholastic lead-
[162] ers. Today they form one hundredth of the population (Censuses of
Madras, Cochin, and Travancore, 1931). Carriers of the Sanskrit lan-
[174] guage and of ancient Vedic culture, they are thought to have entered
Malabar from the eastern plateau sometime after the fall of the Chera
564 kingdom (Logan, 1951, I: 121, 243; Ayyar, 1938: 47). Most Nambudiris were landlords of substance, but they included a number of
463 ranked occupational sub-castes of varying wealth. The greater landlords were managers of large temples, promulgators of religious law, legal advisers of the kings, priests of public sacrifices, or philosophers and Vedic scholars. The lower sub-castes, whose members owned smaller estates, included temple priests, physicians, and household priests and professional cooks who officiated at ceremonies in the Nayar castes.

564 The Nambudiris ranked ritually above the kings and were to some extent above and outside the political systems of the kingdoms. Alone of all the castes, they moved unmolested between enemy kingdoms. They held ceremonies attended by their caste fellows from all parts of Kerala and carried on their system of intra-caste administration independently of the administration of justice within the kingdoms. For the latter purpose they divided Kerala into *gramams* (caste areas) (Logan, 1951, I: 120). Over the whole region a dignitary called the Aravancheri Tamburakkal, who lived in the Calicut kingdom, was universally acknowledged as the ritual and administrative leader of the Nambudiris (Buchanan, 1807: 423–426; Ayyar, 1938: 23). He held the right to install the kings of both Calicut and Cochin, even though these rulers were traditionally at enmity. The field of social relations
of the Nambudiris was thus the whole of Kerala and they played a
[611] role not dissimilar to that of the medieval Catholic church. Descent
among the Nambudiris was patrilineal.

564 *The High-Caste Nayars* Below the Nambudiri Brahmans in ritual
613 rank came the royal *matrilineages* of the several kingdoms. Those in
635 Central Kerala were Calicut, Walluvanad, Palghat, and Cochin. Although of Nayar origin, each of these lineages considered itself superior in ritual rank to the Nayar subjects within its kingdom. Between kingdoms, royal lineages disputed for rank and would not intermarry. Although exogamous, therefore, each royal lineage considered

itself a separate caste. The Cochin lineage claimed descent from the 564
Perumals and ranked as Kshattriyas, the second of the four divisions of 613
all-India Hindu society. The Walluvanad, Palghat, and Calicut lineages, 635
once vassals of the Perumals, were not strictly recognized as Kshattriyas in Brahmin theory and held the title of Samantans. Normally, the oldest man in each royal lineage held the kingship and administered customary law with assistance from Brahman advisers.

Each kingdom was divided into *nāds* (chiefdoms or districts). In 634
the Zamorin's kingdom at the height of its power some of these chief- 613
doms had once been independent small kingdoms. They were conquered by Calicut in the late fourteenth and the fifteenth centuries. 554
They continued to be ruled by their traditional monarchs, who paid tribute to Calicut. Among them were the chiefdoms of Beypore, Chaliyam, Parappanad, Bettem, and Punnattur. Each of these ruling lineages, although feudatory, retained a higher ritual rank than the Zamorin by virtue of its more ancient tradition of government. Similarly, some chiefdoms of the Cochin kingdom were governed by conquered feudatory rulers of higher ritual rank than the royal lineage. The small kingdoms of Walluvanad and Palghat, however, had no feudatories of higher rank than their royal lineages.

The other chiefdoms of a kingdom were ruled by hereditary Nayar chiefs (*nāduvaḻis*) originally appointed by the king, and these chiefs had more restricted powers than the feudatory monarchs. Most of them held the title of Samantan, but all were considered of lower ritual rank than their royal lineages. The Zamorin's kingdom (the largest) appears to have had twenty-eight such district chiefs in the
fifteenth century. Each chiefly lineage, like each royal lineage, tended [564]
to regard itself as a separate caste acknowledging no peers. [613]

Each chiefdom was divided into *dēsams* or villages. A village seems 634
to have covered anything from one to four square miles, comprising 621
both dry garden land and flats of alluvial rice land. Most of the land 471
in each village was normally owned by one landlord family of higher ritual rank than the other occupants.

In some villages the land was owned by a Nambudiri patrilineal 621
extended family, whose large house occupied a central position. In 564
others it was owned by one or other branch of the royal lineage as 471
part of the royal domain. There would then be a palace in the village
and the senior prince of the household would act as village headman. 613
In other villages the land was owned by the chiefly matrilineage of [622]
the district, whether this lineage were of feudatory royal rank or of vassal Samantan rank. Again in this case the chiefly family would live

621 in a small palace and the head of it would fulfil the roles both of
564 chief and of village headman. In other villages the land formed part
471 of the estate of some large temple. These estates, called *sankētams*,
613 were managed by assemblies of Nambudiris who held complete judicial rights over the lower-caste population. Finally, in yet other
[622] villages the land was owned by the matrilineage of a hereditary Nayar village headman (*dēsavari*) originally appointed by the king or by the chief of the district. The Nayar village headmen were drawn from castes ritually lower than those of their district chiefs. In Walluvaned and Calicut village headmen were usually drawn from the Kiriattil Nayar caste. The corresponding caste in Cochin was called Vellayma Nayars.

The landowning families in all of these villages were called *jenmis*. The eldest man of the extended family, whether patrilineal or matrilineal, had legal guardianship of his own family and, in another sense, of the village lands and inhabitants. He sanctioned marriages in all the castes, managed the land devoted to village temples, and paid the temple servants from its produce. A landlord family could not sell its land without the consent of the king and it usually remained on its site over many generations.

621 Villages were classifiable therefore as Brahman, temple, royal,
564 chiefly, and Nayar headmen's villages. In some areas a group of villages of the same type might be adjacent to one another. In each village, subordinate to the landlord in ritual rank and administrative power, lived members of one or other caste of Nayar retainers or
[178] vassals. In modern times these castes have tended to combine as a single caste of "high-class Nayars," so that their former roles are difficult to determine. So far as I could discover they were as follows.

564 First, a caste called Kiriattil Nayars in Calicut and Vellayma Nayars
[622] in Cochin. Most village headmen's lineages were originally drawn from this caste, but after they had assumed office these lineages iso-
[613] lated themselves as a separate sub-caste of higher rank than ordinary Kiriattils. Ordinary Kiriattils appear to have been usually retainers in villages commanded by Nayar village headmen.

Second, a caste called Purattu Charna Nayars ("outdoor retainers") in Calicut. Its members usually lived in villages owned by a district
[701] chief or by the royal lineage. A special, higher-ranking subdivision of the caste called Pariccha Menons ("leaders of the shield") formed the Zamorin's private army and lived on royal land near Calicut.

Third, a caste called Agattu Charna Nayars ("indoor retainers") in Calicut. They also seem to have lived mainly in royal or chiefly vil-

lages. The men were often clerks in the palaces. In Cochin, castes 564
two and three were amalgamated and were called Swarupattil Sudra Nayars or "palace servants."

Fourth, a caste called Pallichan Nayars, both in Calicut and Cochin. Its members also were vassals in the villages of royalty, chiefs, and of the greater Brahmans. The men were often palanquin bearers as well as soldiers.

Fifth, a caste called Sudra Nayars in Calicut and Illath ("Brahman house") Sudras in Cochin. The members lived in villages owned by Brahman families or on the estates of Brahmanical temples.

The mutual ritual ranking of these five castes seems to have varied 564
in different districts. In some districts they ranked in the order given, 554
and men of a higher caste might marry women of a lower caste;
the reverse was in theory forbidden. In other districts the castes seem
to have disputed for precedence and not to have regularly intermar-
ried. In most areas the five castes occupied different villages or dif- [628]
ferent sections of large villages, seem to have had little communica-
tion in peacetime, and did not normally interdine. In war, however, [726]
soldiers of these different castes interdined freely and spent the night
in each others' homes. It is possible that sexual restrictions between
these castes were also relaxed in war, but this point is uncertain.

In each village there were normally some four to seven matrilineages 621
of the appropriate retainer caste. The separate households or property 613
groups within each lineage had the hereditary right, granted by the 564
king, to occupy stretches of garden land and to lease large plots of wet 566
paddy land on long-term tenure from the village landlord. The tenure 471
was called *kānam;* the tenant, *a kānakkaran*. In most villages the men of 427
retainer lineages also owed military service to their landlord, ultimately on behalf of the king. (The military organization is discussed below.) Retainers were called *adiyar*, a word equivalent to "vassals," of their landlord. They participated in his household ceremonies and often waited upon him. Women of retainer lineages could be summoned as serving maids in the landlord's family; men, as bailiffs to collect the landlord's rents and organize the labor of his serfs.

The Temple-Servant Castes In addition to the Nayars, other aristo- 564
cratic castes often lived in a village. These were the temple servants, 794
nowadays collectively called Ambalavasis. They are relevant to our discussion because they sometimes married Nayar women. The highest of these castes were the Chakkyars (or reciters of Puranic stories) and the Pushpagans (or flower gatherers for temples), which had patrilineal descent systems of the same type as the Nambudiris. They

564 794 ranked below Nambudiris but above retainer Nayars and certain matrilineal temple-servant castes. The latter included Nambyars, Puduvals, and Marars, three castes of drummers, and Psharodis and Variyars, castes of temple stewards.

564 794 The temple-servant castes were small and lived chiefly in villages owned by Nambudiri Brahmans or in sankētams. Four types of temples were distinguishable among the higher castes. First were the large temples of the sankētams, whose estates were managed by Nambudiris. They were dedicated to all-India, Puranic deities, usually Siva or Vishnu. Second, were the private temples of individual Nambudiri families in villages owned by Nambudiris, which were small replicas of the first type. Third were the private temples of royal and chiefly matrilineages, dedicated to Bhagavadi or Bhadrakali—the Nayar goddess of war, epidemic, land, and fertility. Fourth were the smaller Bhagavadi temples of village Nayars, each collectively managed by an assembly of Nayar retainers of one or more villages.

In the first two types of temple animal sacrifice was forbidden. [782 793] Offerings were of fruit, flowers, incense, and fire. The priests were low-ranking Nambudiri Brahmans. Nayars might enter the outer courtyards of such temples but might not perform rites there. In a village which formed part of a sankētam there was sometimes no Nayar population at all; a group of lineages of one or more temple-servant castes replaced them as retainers of the Brahmans and as permanent tenants. [613] In Nambudiri villages containing a temple of the second type, one or two lineages of some temple-servant caste would be attached to the temple, but there would invariably also be a group of Sudra Nayar retainers with their own Bhagavadi temple.

564 794 613 In villages under a Nayar headman there might be only one Bhagavadi temple managed collectively by Nayars. One lineage of the Marar caste might be present to drum in the temple, but the other temple-servant castes did not work in Nayar village temples. Similarly, in a royal or chiefly village containing a large Bhagavadi temple of the ruling lineage, the temple-servant castes might be absent except for one lineage of Marars. Persons of other temple-servant castes might however come from nearby villages to assist at special ceremonies.

794 564 [793] [791] [782] In Bhagavadi temples the regular priest was usually of a special low subdivision of Nambudiris (Adigals). In addition a Nayar shaman, attached to the temple, periodically became possessed by the goddess and declared her will to the people. Daily rites in the Bhagavadi temple were similar to those in a Brahman temple, but annual festi-

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vals involved animal sacrifice by Nayars in which Brahmans and temple servants took no part. 564 [782]

Consistent with these differences in ritual practice, Nambudiris and temple servants were vegetarians and followed rules of non-violence. Royals, chiefs, and Nayar retainers were warriors and until modern [262] times usually ate meat and drank liquor. The matrilineal castes of temple servants were otherwise culturally similar to Nayars, with [613] whom they probably had a common origin.

Below the Chakkyars and the Pushpagans, the Nambyars, Psharodis, 564 Variyars, and Puduvals disputed for ritual rank and would not interdine. These castes ranked roughly parallel to the district chiefs, with whom they had few social relations and did not interdine. They ranked above the retainer Nayars, who might receive food from them but might not give to them. Marars ranked below the other temple servants and parallel to retainer Nayars, with whom, however, they had few social relations outside the temple and did not interdine.

The Nayar Menials in Temples Below all these aristocratic castes 564 came certain small matrilineal castes of menial, non-military Nayars 794 whose work was largely connected with temples. Vattekad Nayars [613] were oilmongers; Odatt Nayars, tile makers; Andura Nayars, temple potters. One Vattekad lineage was present in every village to supply oil for temple lamps. Often the headman of the Vattekad lineage was the shaman of the Nayar Bhagavadi temple. Vattekad Nayars also performed household tasks for Kiriattil Nayar village headmen, which ordinary Kiriattil Nayars were too proud to do. Odatt and Andura Nayars were very small castes,[8] and one lineage might serve six or eight villages.

The Nayar Servant Castes Below the temple menials came three 564 matrilineal castes of servant Nayars with "degrading" occupations. 613 Chidigans (called Attikurssis in the Calicut kingdom) were funeral priests of the higher matrilineal castes. Veluttedans were washermen of all the castes above them and Vilakkataravans were barbers of all the castes above them. One lineage of each was usually present in a village. Funeral priests ranked above barbers and washermen, who disputed for rank and would not interdine.

Social Relations among the Higher Castes The castes so far men- 564

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[8] The kings permitted only Brahmans, royalty, and the greater chiefs to roof their [643] houses and temples with tiles. Tile making was therefore a minor craft, and temple [333] pottery was of superior quality to that used by commoners. The ordinary polluting caste of potters, Kumbarans, camped outside villages and exchanged their wares [323] for grain.

564 [361] tioned were called "high," "good," or "clean" castes. They lived in a separate portion of the village around the temples and the landlord's establishment, with each house in its own fenced garden. Except for the servant Nayars all might enter either Brahman or Nayar temples. Within this group, lower castes were forbidden to touch higher castes because of rules of ritual pollution, but individuals of different castes might approach each other within a few feet. Equal interdining took place only between caste fellows, but members of lower castes might *receive* food from higher-caste hosts. In ritual terms these castes thus formed the upper ranks of society, although only the Nayar retainers and those above them were economically and socially aristocrats. Nambudiris and two small castes of their temple servants were patrilineal; all the rest were matrilineal.

101 121 564 I have designated as "Nayars" all the castes which bear this title today. They are not a unitary group but a named category of castes. Traditionally, the title Nayar seems not to have been extended to all these castes. Before 1498 the military Nayars or retainer Nayars were called Lokar (Ayyar, 1938: 32). What the other matrilineal castes were called is not known. "Nayar" was not then a caste name [703] but a title conferred by the king on lineages whose members had won special military honor. The Portuguese called all the soldiers "Nayars" and during the period of European trade it seems to have come into use as a title held by all the military castes. Some Nayars say that the temple menial castes and the matrilineal castes of washermen and barbers usurped the title only during British rule, in order to raise their status. The higher temple-servant castes, although matrilineal, never adopted the title because they ranked above the military Nayars and had honorable titles of their own. This paper primarily concerns the Nayar military retainers, their village headmen, chiefs, and royalty.

THE HIGHER POLLUTING CASTES

564 162 621 The high castes were the religious and secular aristocrats and their personal servants. In many respects the polluting castes lived a separate social life, being located in a different part of the village. They included, in order of rank, Tiyyars (called Iravas in Cochin), who were palm-wine makers and tenant farmers, with twenty to forty households per village; Kanisans or astrologers, with one to three households per village; the artisan castes of blacksmiths, goldsmiths, carpenters, bell-metal workers, and stonemasons (who ranked equally), each with one to three houses per village; low-caste washermen and barbers (who ranked equally), each with one to five houses per vil-

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lage; and bow makers, each with about one to ten houses per village. 564
Tiyyars, astrologers, washermen, and barbers had double unilineal 162
descent: localized patrilineages with dispersed exogamous matrilineal [611]
clans. Artisans and bow makers had patrilineages only. [613]

The polluting castes worked for each other and for the higher castes. 564
Tiyyars held land on a sub-tenure from landlords and Nayar tenants. [427]
Astrologers and artisans gave services to the higher castes, to each
other, and to the Tiyyars, who ranked above them. Barbers worked for
all the higher polluting castes but not for the "good" castes, who employed the Nayar barber. Washermen laundered for all the higher polluting castes but not regularly for the "good" castes, who employed the Nayar washerman. However, the low-caste washerman's lineage owed services to the "good" castes at death, menstruation, and childbirth. Bow makers served Nayars and Tiyyars. Each of the polluting castes was endogamous and interdined only within the caste.

THE LOWER POLLUTING CASTES

On the outskirts of the village, in separate small hamlets, lived the very low castes of Parayas and Pulayas. Parayas were a small caste of basket and umbrella makers. Two or three households had a village right to serve all castes above them. Pulayas were until 1850 the agricultural serfs of Nayars, temple servants, and Brahmans (Buchanan, 1807: 370–372). As highly polluting castes, Pulayas and Parayas were theoretically forbidden to approach the high castes within a distance of sixty-four feet. They might not enter the "good" area of the village or walk on the main paths.

OTHER RELIGIOUS GROUPS

Muslims, called Mappillas, were concentrated in the Zamorin's king- 563
dom, where they followed patrilineal descent. In 1931 they formed [162]
about 15 per cent of Kerala's population. Their presence dates from
the ninth century, when Arab traders began to make converts, prob- [797]
ably mainly from the Tiyyars and the coastal caste of fishermen. From
the Arabs and from these converts there sprang a flourishing trad- [439]
ing community which increased greatly in the fourteenth century
(Logan, 1951, I: 192–197). The Zamorins derived a large measure of
their power from the Muslims through taxes and naval support (Ay-
yar, 1938: 54). Muslims lived mainly in the ports and at inland trad-
ing posts on the banks of rivers. They were partly outside the village [361]
ranking system, which had its basis in differential land rights, and
were theoretically outside the Hindu religious hierarchy. Nevertheless, [554]
Muslims were in some contexts accorded a rank ritually and socially
between that of Nayars and Tiyyars.

563 The Christians of Kerala numbered about 20 per cent of the popu-
[162] lation in 1931. The Syrian Christians, the most ancient and numerous group, may be descended from Persian Nestorians; they were trading on the coast at least by 525 A.D. (McCrindle, 1897: 119). Christians were and are concentrated in Travancore and Cochin. They received
[651] land grants near the ports and enjoyed virtual self-government provided they paid taxes to the kings (Logan, 1951, I: 260–270; III: cxxi–cxxvi). As landlords, tenants, and administrators—as well as traders—they ranked socially parallel to the Nayars and were served in the same manner by Hindu polluting castes and serfs. Their trade declined after the Arabs became dominant on the coast, and some of them began to serve in the royal armies along with Nayars. The Portuguese converted some Syrians to Roman Catholicism, but the converts still retained the Syriac rite. All Syrians were readily distinguishable from the lower-ranking Latin Catholics, converts to Catholicism from Portuguese times who were drawn from various polluting castes.

The Economic System

438 The principles of reciprocity and redistribution,[4] rather than of market trade, dominated the village economy until toward the mid-nineteenth
[564] century. In villages, castes were characterized by hereditary occupations and correspondingly by hereditary, differential rights in the
[463] produce of village lands (Logan, 1951, I: 110–112, 269, 270, 599–600, 623). The village landlord and the Nayar tenants were the main redistributive agents, collecting in goods from the lower orders and
[592] redistributing them in customary shares. In all village economic transactions, *households*, and not whole caste groups or individuals, were the units of interaction.

The village landlord's household "owned" almost all the land in the
471 village. "Ownership" meant both more and less than modern Western
592 landownership (Logan, 1951, I: 602–603). The landlord might not sell
566 his land without the consent of the king or of a chief, and sale was restricted to families of appropriate caste. He might not evict his tenants, village servants, or serfs without their consent unless they committed grave crime (*ibid.*, I: 607). On the other hand, the landlord's ownership included judicial rights over the village population.

The landlord retained a portion of the land as his private domain for cultivation by his serfs. The rest was held by Nayar retainer households as non-cultivating tenants (*kānakkar*). The tenant's household

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[4] For an analysis of the general operation of these principles in the Indian village economy, see Neale, 1957: 218–236.

originally rendered a portion of the produce to the landlord and additionally 471
paid tribute in kind at New Year and at the succession of 592
a new landlord or a new tenant on the death of the old (*ibid.*, I: 605-614). 566
In return for their hereditary land rights tenants owed military
and personal services to the landlord or to his military representative.

Each Nayar tenant household, like the landlord, retained a portion
of land for cultivation by its serfs. Serfs were attached to the plots
on which they lived, took the house name of their masters and were
held as ancestral property. The master supplied the serf with daily
rice, building materials, a house site, and special gifts at life crises
and festivals.

Each tenant household also gave some lands to cultivating subtenant
households (*verumpāttamdar*) of the Tiyyar caste. According
to Logan, the latter traditionally retained one-third of the net produce
and surrendered the rest to their masters (*ibid.*, I: 583).

The Nayar servant castes and most of the polluting castes of village 564
servants (astrologers, artisans, bow makers, basket makers, etc.) 471
owed their main services to the landlord, the Nayar tenants, or both.
Each family held the hereditary service right of a village or occasionally
of a small group of adjacent villages. Village servants gave
their services to the appropriate higher-caste households when required.
In return they received from each patron household customary
biennial shares of rice and other goods after the two harvests of the
year. Each servant family held a house site and garden from the
landlord by hereditary right and was provided by its various patrons
with the materials (metal, wood, etc.) of its craft.

Among the higher polluting castes, most of the village servants 564
(astrologers, artisans, washermen, barbers, etc.) simply exchanged 437
services reciprocally without making gifts of grain. Within this range
of castes, however, Tiyyars, as cultivators, were subsidiary agents
of redistribution, for they received the services of almost all the village
servant castes and made biennial gifts to them of grain.

The village was thus almost self-sufficient for food and the daily [262]
necessities of life. In addition, part of its produce in rice and coconuts
went out in the form of annual tribute given by the landlord to his
district chief. The chief in turn gave tribute to the king and in addition [651]
rendered succession fees and gifts at life-crisis rites (Logan,
1951, II: ccxviii–ccxix; Ayyar, 1938: 270).

A large part of the king's revenue, however, came from taxes on 651
overseas trade. Before 1500 the trade was in the hands of Arab 439
merchants, who obtained pepper and other spices from inland land-

651 lords and tenants through indigenous Muslim middlemen. At that
439 time the middlemen appear to have paid the villagers directly in
cloth, metals, and luxury goods. Sumptuary laws confined the use of
many imported goods to Brahmans, Nayars, and merchants. Other
[431] strategic goods such as metals and cloth filtered down from the landlords
and tenants to the lower castes in the form of customary gifts
at festivals.

439 During the period of European trade (1500 to 1792) markets and
cash transactions encroached further upon the subsistence economy of
436 villages. The kings prosecuted larger and larger wars and increasingly
paid their Nayar soldiers in cash, even though they continued to
muster them through the Nayars' "feudal lords."[5] As the pepper and
coconut trade increased, new gardens came under cultivation and
landlords and tenants often sold their spices for cash. The Nayar
[566] retainers seem to have received most of this cash from the towns,
for as tenants they held the bulk of the village's garden lands as well
as receiving their payments in war. From about 1550, therefore, landlords,
who wished to maintain control of the economy, had to develop
436 some means of extracting money from their tenants. Cash payments
439 thus became a regular feature of the *kānam* tenure (Logan, 1951, I:
427 cxxxi). The tenant periodically advanced a cash sum to the landlord
as a kind of forced loan, the interest on which was then set off against
178 the annual payment in kind. At the death of either landlord or tenant
13 per cent of the original sum was deducted from the loan as a
succession fee. The tenant might then repay this amount in cash or
revert to paying a larger share in kind. Later in the period cash
renewal fees seem to have been exacted by landlords every twelve
years. In some cases the tenant would prefer to surrender his land
or to sell his right and move his family to another village. Sales of
landlord rights, even (near the ports) to Europeans or Muslims, also
[425] increased. However, sale of either landlord or tenant rights remained
disreputable, lengthy, and hedged about with legal restrictions until
after the collapse of native rule (K. P. P. Menon, 1929: 309–310;
Logan, 1951, I: 597 *et seq.;* II: cxxxv).

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[171] [631] [5] I use the term "feudal" here without precise definition. In many respects the political structure of the Central kingdoms was comparable with that of the stronger Western European principalities such as Flanders and Normandy in the second half of the eleventh century. There was centralized control of the judiciary, of armies, trade, and coinage, but within each principality subordinate lords retained minor judicial powers and owned domains and private armies (Stephenson, 1942: 80–92).

European trade shook the foundations of the caste system in other 439
ways. Ports grew larger, and within them European merchants employed 564
Christian converts, artisans, and runaway serfs. Near the ports, [567]
serfs sometimes became slaves, being torn from their ancestral lands
and sold or hired for cash.

Nevertheless, until the introduction of steam power in the second [375]
half of the nineteenth century, the technology and over-all economy [177]
of Kerala did not change very radically. Trade was still limited to
surplus crops, luxury goods, and metals. Inland villages remained
largely self-sufficient, with the lower castes excluded from cash
transactions. Upward mobility was virtually confined to Muslims, [554]
Christians, and the Hindu aristocrats above the rank of Nayar retainers.
It seems to have been this lack of basic change in the technology [177]
which allowed the persistence of a strict, hereditary rank
order in villages and, within each homogeneous local caste group,
of kinship as the main organizing principle.

War and Law

The traditional period was one of perpetual wars between adjacent 635
kingdoms, interrupted only in the rainy seasons. A royal lineage's 726
strength lay in its monopoly of gunpowder, coinage, and customs 613
dues, its ability to use foreign and Muslim ships for naval warfare,
and its control of the royal domains both as a source of produce and
of Nayar retainers as soldiers. Through its superior wealth and
military power a royal lineage could force feudatory princes and
vassal nobles to muster soldiers throughout the kingdom in periods
of large-scale war. Each district and each village was classified according 701
to the number of Nayar soldiers it could customarily muster 635
for war. In the Zamorin's kingdom the strength of royal feudatories
varied between 18,000 and 1,000 Nayars; of Nayar chiefs, between 634
5,000 and 100; of village headmen, between about 100 and 25 (Ayyar,
1938: 278). Records of the muster of each feudatory were kept by the
Nayar clerks of the palace. The primary duty of each chief was to
assemble regularly the soldiers of his district for military exercises
at the capital, and in time of war to lead them to battle, with the
king himself at their head. Within the district military training was 701
organized on a village basis. This might be done by a Nayar village 634
headman, by the chief himself, or, in Brahman villages, by a Nayar 702
military leader (Asan) who acted for the chief or the king. All 564
Nayar boys of the retainer, village headmen, and chiefly and royal

701 702 634 564 castes seem to have received a military training, although some, especially of the Agattu Charna caste, later became clerks (Dames, 1921: 18–19; A. Gray, 1887, I: 412–413).

726 [411] [177] The Nayars' traditional arms were the sword, shield, lance, and the bow and arrow, although gunpowder came into increasing use after the Portuguese arrived. Before 1500 battles were highly stylized (cf. C. A. Menon, 1911: 56; Ayyar, 1938: 118, 171). Not more than 10,000 were commonly brought into the field at one time. Severe loss of life was prevented by the employment of Brahman emissaries who, if fighting became intense, might enter the field and arbitrate between the leaders. If, however, the king or a chief were slain, his personal vassals had to fight to the death or until their honor was avenged by the slaughter of a corresponding leader on the enemy side (Logan, 1951, I: 138).

726 177 [436] Later, with the introduction of cannon and fortresses by the Europeans, battles became more frequent and devastating. The Zamorin mustered a total force of between 50,000 and 60,000 at various times in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries against the ruler of Cochin (Ayyar, 1938: 169, 182). The kings had to rely increasingly on paying their soldiers in cash rather than on sporadic feudal levies. Permanent conquest and the control of rich lands also became a more urgent aim of the kings as the overseas trade expanded. But the Nayar techniques of fighting and their code of honor persisted until British times.

564 692 [681] [567] [439] Within each kingdom, law was administered at several levels. Each local caste group had its own periodic assembly of household heads to judge crimes (which were also sins) against the caste's religious laws. These included wrongful interdining and sexual relations with members of other castes. The chief punishments were fines for the upkeep of the caste shrine and temporary ostracism. Grave offenders were excommunicated with the consent of the chief. They then became the property of either king or chief and were sold as slaves to foreign traders. In the larger castes such as Tiyyars or Pulayas the local caste group was often contained within the village. The smaller castes of village servants each had their own assemblies extending over a group of adjacent villages.

564 621 [692] [623] Among retainer Nayars the local caste group might comprise the Nayars of one caste within one village, within a section of a large village, or within a group of two to four adjacent small villages. This area was called a *tara* in the Calicut kingdom and a *kara* in Cochin; we shall call it a neighborhood. Its assembly was called a *tara-kūttam*

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or *kara-yōgam* (Logan, 1951, I: 87–88, 132–133). The functions of 621
intra-caste administration of the Nayar assembly are discussed later [692]
in connection with the lineage. [623]

The village headman, assisted by representatives from the Nayar 622
retainers, judged small civil cases concerning debt, petty theft, or
trespass. He appropriated the fines in these cases (Munro, quoted in 692
Ayyar, 1938: 288). Individual Nayars also arbitrated in small civil 564
disputes carried voluntarily to them by disputants within their own
or the lower castes. Serfs came directly under the jurisdiction of their [566]
Nayar or Brahman masters, who had the power of life and death
over them.

In the castes above the serfs, larger civil disputes and grave 692
crimes were judged in the court of either chief or king. Chiefs' 564
(*nāduvaris'*) judicial powers varied with the size of their armies, but
feudatory princes (*svarūpis*) retained complete judicial rights with
power over life and death (Ayyar, 1938: 272). So also did the
Brahman managers of temple-estates, although they called upon
some local chief to carry out their judgments. Murder, sacrilege,
treason, the wounding of a cow or of a Brahman, indecent assault of
a woman, and grave theft from a man of "good" caste were generally
punishable by death (*ibid.*: 282). Brahmans and women, however,
were never officially executed by order of the king. All offenses among
Brahmans were tried by an assembly of the Brahman neighborhood,
which, with the local ruler's approval, might excommunicate the offender.
If a woman of any caste above serfs was convicted of a capital [567]
offense the king had the right to sell her into slavery.

The higher the cast, the wider the field of social relations. Among 564
the serfs and the higher polluting castes this was confined to a group 571
of adjacent villages. Among temple servants, village headmen, and
retainer Nayars (apart from their excursions in war) the field of social
relations was the chiefdom. Among chiefs and royalty it was the
kingdom, and among Brahmans, Kerala.

Hypergamy in the Upper Castes

Each of the castes below Nayar temple menials was endogamous, as 564
is usual in the caste system throughout India. But among the higher
"clean" castes the integration of political offices and of the larger
territorial units was strengthened by hypergamous marriages. By
hypergamy I mean the marriage of a woman of lower caste to a man
of higher caste.

In discussing hypergamy it is necessary to explain the descent 564
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564 system of Nambudiris. In the Nambudiri patrilineal extended family
613 only the eldest son was permitted to marry (with Vedic rites) within his caste, and beget children for his family. Younger sons had recognized liaisons with women of the matrilineal castes, whose children belonged to their mother's caste and lineage by matrilineal descent. These hypergamous unions were regarded by Brahmans as socially acceptable concubinage, for the union was not initiated with Vedic rites, the children were not legitimized as Brahmans, and neither the woman nor her child was accorded the rights of kin. By the matrilineal castes, however, the same unions were regarded as marriage, for they fulfilled the conditions of ordinary Nayar marriage and served to legitimize the child as an acceptable member of his matrilineal lineage and caste.

If a Nambudiri eldest son remained childless the second son might marry a Nambudiri woman and beget children for his family. Unmarried Nambudiri women, of whom there were many, remained in their natal homes and were maintained by their fathers and brothers. The eldest son of a Nambudiri house might however have several Brahman wives (who lived patrilocally with him) and also several Nayar partners whom he visited in their homes. Nambudiri younger sons lived and ate in their natal households, headship of which passed from the eldest son down the line of brothers and then dropped to the next generation. In this way the Nambudiri family was prevented from splitting into segments and was enabled to maintain its ancestral estate intact over many generations. If in any generation a family had no son, succession was ensured by the adoption of a daughter's husband or of a man related through some cognatic tie.

The possible directions of hypergamous marriages in the Cochin kingdom are briefly as follows. In the royal lineages marriages were entirely hypergamous. In Cochin and Walluvanad royal women married only Nambudiris of the highest and wealthiest sub-castes within the kingdom. Royal men married women of chiefly lineages within the kingdom, of village headmen's lineages within their own domain, or of retainer Nayar lineages in the royal villages. In the Calicut kingdom royal women married either Nambudiris or the feudatory princes of higher rank and more ancient lineage than themselves. Royal men married women of the same lower matrilineal groups as in the Cochin and Walluvanad kingdoms. Women of the feudatory royal lineages married only Nambudiris; men married royal women or women of chiefly, village headmen's, or retainer Nayar lineages within their own area of rule.

Each Nayar chiefly lineage, like royalty, normally counted itself a separate caste and married only hypergamously. Women of chiefly lineages married the royals or feudatory royals to whom their lineages were immediately subordinate, or wealthy Nambudiris, usually of their own district. Men of chiefly lineages married women of village headmen's lineages within their district, or women of retainer Nayar lineages, usually in their own villages. 564 613

Village headmen's lineages occasionally contracted marriages reciprocally with other village headmen's lineages of the chiefdom which had originally sprung from the same retainer caste. They also provided wives for chiefs and Brahmans and husbands for retainer women, usually of their own villages. [622]

Among temple servants, Nayar retainers, and Nayar temple menials the majority of marriages were between persons of the same caste. A few women in the Psharodi, Variyar, Poduval, and Nambyar castes married Nambudiris, especially those whose families managed the temples where they worked. A few such women also married men of the Chakkyar and Pushpagan castes which had descent systems like that of the Nambudiris. A few men of these matrilineal temple-servant castes married women of Nayar retainer and Nayar temple-menial castes in the villages of their work. Nayar women were particularly convenient partners for temple servants and Nambudiri temple priests because of the latters' spatial distribution. Often a temple-servant lineage or a Brahman priestly family held the hereditary right of service in six or eight small temples in villages up to ten miles away. One man of the lineage might spend much of his life working away from home in one of the more distant temples. He would live on food previously offered to the deity, occupy a room attached to the temple kitchen, bathe in the temple bathing pool, and visit a local Nayar wife at nights, returning home for life crises and festivals. 564 794 613

Women of the retainer Nayar castes might receive husbands from all the castes above them. Sudra Nayar women living in Brahman-owned villages or on the estates of large temples were the most likely to form links with Brahmans and temple servants; Charna Nayars and Pallichans, with royalty or chiefs; and Kiriattil women, with village headmen. Thus hypergamous unions entered into by retainer Nayars in general followed the main lines of lord-vassal relationships. However, "odd" marriages with individuals of any higher rank in nearby villages were permitted. 564

Because the higher castes were much smaller than they were, the Nayar retainers probably gave less than 10 per cent of their women

564 to men of higher caste. Men of the retainer castes made still fewer marriages in the castes of temple menials. The latter also received as husbands a few temple servants and a few Nambudiris of the lowest sub-castes of cooks and household priests. The temple-menial castes did not intermarry, and their men seem thus to have been confined to women of their own caste. Hypergamy stopped at this level and the Nayar servant castes were each endogamous.

564 613 The hypergamy of the Nayar office-bearing lineages fitted their gradual social mobility and lack of rank parity with each other. With time, because of the vicissitudes of war and conquest, a retainer lineage might be appointed as village headmen, and might later even aspire to chiefly rank. Several of the chiefly lineages of Kerala can be traced back to much humbler origins three to six centuries ago. Apart from the regular offices of rule over territorial units, commoner Nayar lineages might also attain special rank as ministers or military leaders. When a lineage received promotion in this way, its members in course of time declared themselves ritually higher than those of the caste from which they sprang and would no longer interdine or intermarry with that caste on equal terms. Hypergamy permitted these isolated office-bearing lineages to marry in unequivocally higher and unequivocally lower groups, but to side-step the awkward question of their precise rank in the hierarchy as a whole.

Hypergamous marriages, like all Nayar marriages, were tenuous and carried few obligations. Nevertheless, the dependence of aristocratic castes on each other for spouses and genitors must have strengthened relations between them. Hypergamy inextricably linked the secular and the religious hierarchies, whose interests in many contexts were opposed. Nambudiris waged a perpetual struggle to preserve their lands and judicial powers from encroachment by kings and chiefs. Their religious laws forbade bloodshed on the estates of their great temples. If a local ruler invaded such an estate or flouted its laws, the Brahmanical assembly exercised its religious authority to fine him in land, cash, or elephants and closed their gates till he repented. This does not mean that the kings were puppets of the Brahmans. When a king conquered a new district its Brahmans came over to his side. They gave him the right to protect their temples and to use their Nayar retainers in war, on receipt of a fine for any personal inconvenience they had suffered. They obviously needed the ruler's military protection of their religious and landed rights. The rulers in turn needed the Brahmans, for the whole social system was sanctioned by religious beliefs of which they were the chief exponents. Marriages at all levels between the religious and secular hierarchies pointed up this interdependence. 564 613

Among the Nayars hypergamy must also have cemented lord-vassal relationships. Older Nayars still take pride in the fact that their lineages have for centuries been fathered by chiefs, royals, and Brahmans. Traditionally, it was for the sake of this generalized filial bond that they were prepared to die in battle and, paradoxically, to deny themselves paternal rights in their own children.

Matrilineal Units of the Nayar Retainer Castes

THE CLAN

The clan was the largest matrilineal unit to which a Nayar commoner belonged. 614 Its members believed themselves descended from a common ancestress, but her name was not normally remembered and the exact genealogical relationships between a clan's subordinate segments were often unknown. Occasionally, all of a clan's known members lived within a single Nayar neighborhood (*tara*). [621] In this case the clan was co-terminous with the next lower order of matrilineal unit, which I call the lineage. More commonly, the clan had a nucleus of members within the neighborhood from which it originally sprang, together with outlying segments whose forebears had moved to other neighborhoods of the chiefdom. Clan affiliations among Nayar retainers do not seem to have extended beyond the chiefdom.

The clan was called a *taravād*, the word also used for the lineage and the matrilineal household unit. "Taravād" is derived from "tara," meaning "mound,"* in this case the raised foundation on which a Nayar house was built. [192] [613] [592] [342] Its members derived a sense of unity from the belief that their matrilineal forebears sprang from the same ancestral house, and if the site of this house still existed they retained a sentimental attachment to it. The word "taravād" (befitting for a settled agricultural people) was in fact equivalent to the English "house" in its sense both of ancestry and of place. The clan was usually called by the name of its original ancestral house site.

The clan was exogamous and sex relations within it were forbidden. [834] Those of its members who lived near and met often used kinship terms to address each other. [601] If a death or birth occurred, clan members had to be informed by messenger. [203] Upon receipt of the informa- [764] [844] [783]

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* Any kind of raised foundation of earth or laterite is called a tara. Tara (meaning "neighborhood") is derived from the large platform of earth round a sacred "milk"-exuding tree (*alstonia scholaris*) located near the Nayar neighborhood temple of Bhagavadi. The neighborhood assembly congregated on this mound. [623]

614 764 844 783 tion they entered for fifteen days into a condition of ritual pollution. They might not eat with nor touch other Nayars, enter the temple or other houses, bathe in the public bathing pools of their caste, or eat meat or salt. Death pollution, and to a milder degree birth pollution, cut off the clan from participation in the social life of the caste. It isolated the members as a group set apart in a special and dangerous ritual condition, who had to observe taboos for their own and each others' safety. Its observance stressed the kinship connection of clansmen and marked their common concern on the occasion of an increase or decrease in their membership. Only those clansmen living within the neighborhood, however, were obliged to attend a funeral or visit a house of birth. Beyond these observances clansmen had only loosely defined rights of hospitality in each other's homes. As far as I am aware they never assembled as an organized group.

614 In time a clan might divide into two or more clans by the common consent of its members. The decision to separate depended both on geographical distance and on distance of relationship. If a segment of the core unit moved into an adjacent neighborhood its members might maintain clanship with the parent lineage for several hundred years thereafter. If they moved to a distant part of the district (say, fifteen miles away) their grandchildren might sever the connection. Severing clanship was called "cutting the pollution bond." Representatives of the branches met and decided not to inform each other of future deaths in their respective groups. Usually the outlying branch would soon afterward adopt the name of the oldest ancestral house site in its own vicinity as its clan name. Exogamy was theoretically preserved as long as matrilineal ties were remembered—usually, about three generations after the division.

Beyond the neighborhood, clan ties had no legal or economic concomitants and were relatively unimportant, their claims being subordinated to those of lineage, village, neighborhood, district, and kingdom.

THE LINEAGE

613 A lineage comprised those members of a clan living in one Nayar neighborhood, and it operated within the legal and social framework of this unit. As we have noted, the retainer Nayars of a neighborhood were of the same caste. They interdined and intermarried freely and the neighborhood was their unit of caste administration. A neighborhood might comprise the retainer Nayars of one village or of two or three adjacent villages, or occasionally Nayars of only part of a large village (e.g., a royal village) in which more than one caste of

613 Nayar retainers resided. A neighborhood normally contained some six to ten lineages and probably had a population of about three hundred Nayars.

The lineage was called a *taravād*. If it occupied the ancestral village of the clan its members used the ancestral house name as both clan and lineage names. If it lived elsewhere its members added a distinctive name, derived from their new locale, to the clan name. Each segment of a lineage occupying one house in turn had its own house name, and each Nayar had a personal name followed by the caste title. A typical Nayar name might therefore be "Thengiparambil Padikkil Kirakkutt-Velappil Govindan Nayar"—"Clan of the coconut garden, lineage of the gatehouse, household of the eastern garden, Govindan (personal name) Nayar." Usually one branch of a lineage continued to occupy and to rebuild the oldest ancestral home of the clan. The clan, lineage, and house names of these members would then be collapsed into one.

613 592 A lineage normally comprised some four to eight households, each a matrilineal segment of three to six generations' depth, including the youngest children and the common ancestress. Sometimes the households of a lineage might occupy adjacent gardens on a continuous stretch of dry land in the high-caste residential area of one village. Alternatively the houses of a lineage might become scattered throughout the high-caste residential areas of the several villages of the neighborhood. For it was possible for Nayar tenants, with the consent of the various overlords concerned, to buy or exchange the tenures of gardens. Further, a branch of a lineage which was expanding might be allotted the tenure of a newly developed garden at some distance from its former abode. Normally, however, the gardens in which their houses were built remained in the possession of one or other branch of a lineage over many generations.

613 Some writers would not apply the word lineage to the group which I am discussing. It was not always a lineage in the sense of a matrilineal group tracing descent from a common ancestress through a determinate number of generations (cf. *Notes and Queries in Anthropology*, 1952: 88–89). This definition applied to lineages which had occupied a neighborhood only for six or seven generations. It might also apply to an older lineage some of whose branches had died out, or to an older lineage whose membership had not happened to expand greatly over several generations. Often, however, there would be very old lineages whose most distantly related segments no longer remembered their exact genealogical relationship and whose members

613 [592] were no longer sure of the name of their founding ancestress. The reason for this was that over time, a lineage was formed from the successive divisions of matrilineal households springing from an original matrilineal household. As will be seen later, a matrilineal group occupying one house and jointly owning property divided into its component major segments to form two or more new households at a definite point in its development. Each woman was potentially the ancestress of a distinct segment. However, her segment would in fact become distinct only if she had two or more daughters who themselves lived to bear daughters. If she had only one daughter this woman replaced her in the lineage structure as the ancestress of her segment, and after three or four generations the existence of one or other of these women would be forgotten.

613 592 768 [614] However, although exact genealogical relationships tended to be forgotten after some five to seven generations, the order of segmentation within a lineage was remembered because it was relevant to the reversion of property. If a household died out, its property was divided between those segments of the same order as itself which had sprung from the next larger segment. It is for this reason that I call the clan members of one neighborhood a lineage, for their order of segmentation *was* known and was relevant in this limited context. As far as I am aware, those branches of a clan which left their ancestral neighborhood lost their right to claim property in the village of their origin.

613 [578] [692] In other ways the order of segmentation was unimportant for the structuring of intra-lineage relationships. It is true that minimal segments of a minor segment which had jointly held property a generation previously, maintained a closer sense of kinship than did more distantly related segments. But segments intermediate between the household and the lineage had no special property, activities, or ceremonies, and their members never met to the exclusion of other lineage kin. Neither were whole intermediate segments mobilized in quarrels between individuals of a lineage. Quarrels were restricted to the households of the disputants and were normally settled through appeal to a popular, unrelated arbitrator. If they became serious they were forcibly settled by the intervention of the neighborhood assembly and of the village headman.

[614] [834] As a part of the clan, the lineage was exogamous, sex relations were prohibited within it, and ritual pollution was observed by its members at a birth or death. Outside the lineage and within the clan it is doubtful whether these rules could be enforced by law. Within

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the lineage they were legally mandatory. The local caste assembly, [623]
with the backing of royal or chiefly authority, could take action [692]
against offenders. Intra-lineage incest was indeed a crime punishable
by death. As a matter of courtesy, lineage members extended ap- [684]
propriate kinship terms to one another. [601]

Unless it was declining in numbers and had shrunk to the proportions of a single household, the lineage was not an economic unit.
Its members did not jointly own an estate and did not coöperate in the [474]
production or distribution of goods. These functions accrued to the small segment of a lineage occupying a single homestead, which I
call a property group. Lineage kin *were* the residual heirs of a [768]
property group which died out. However, such reversion of property
was rare. A property group which had no childbearing women usually [597]
adopted one or more girls from some other branch of the lineage in order to perpetuate itself.

A "commoner" lineage had no headman. Its oldest man commanded special respect but he had no legal authority over the lineage as a
whole. The office of headman of the lineage existed only in village [622]
headmen's, chiefly, and royal lineages. Here the political office was theoretically vested in the eldest man of the lineage, irrespective of branch. These lineages had a somewhat different structure, discussed below.

The members of a lineage engaged in coöperative activities at two 613
major life crises: the pre-puberty marriage rite of girls, and the funeral 476
of a member, followed by offerings to the departed spirit on the [588]
fifteenth and sixteenth days after the death. [765]

Both of these occasions involved the caste assembly of the neigh-
borhood and the institution of linked lineages or *enangar*. The caste [564]
assembly comprised the eldest men (*kāranavar*) of all the property
groups. It met periodically on a mound (tara) near the Bhagavadi [623]
temple of the neighborhood to manage the temple's affairs. It also [692]
judged offenses against the religious laws of the caste.

Each lineage was linked by hereditary ties of ceremonial coöperation to two or three other lineages of the neighborhood. These linkages were reciprocal but not exclusive. For example, lineage A might have as enangar B, C, and D, whereas B might have A, E, and F, and so on. A chain of such relationships therefore linked all lineages of the neighborhood.

The enangar were partners who offered help in a ceremonial manner at all major life crises. They stood as formal links between the lineage and the total neighborhood group, which was called the *enangu*. In

613 small neighborhoods, indeed, all the lineages were sometimes enangar
476 to one another, although this seems to have been rare. At least one
man and one woman of each of its enangar lineage had to visit a
household for the life-crisis rites of its members, at which they gave
[553] ceremonial assistance and partook of a feast. These rites included the
naming ceremony of a baby, the first rice feeding in the sixth month,
[588] the pre-puberty marriage rite of girls, the first menstruation ceremony
[881] of a girl, the first pregnancy ceremony of a woman, the offerings to
[843] a departed spirit which closed the period of death pollution, and the
subsequent offerings each year to the spirits of recently dead mem-
[769] bers of a property group on the anniversaries of their deaths. Enangar
[765] also gave neighborly help on the day of a cremation and, during the
[783] fifteen days of death pollution, provided cooked food for the house-
hold of the bereaved.

613 Although whole lineages were linked as enangar to each other, a
linked lineage acted as a collectivity only at the pre-puberty marriage
592 rite, at cremations, and on the sixteenth day after a death. For the
other life crises, each household of a lineage would invite as enangar
partners only one household in each of their linked lineages with
whom they had special customary ties. Similarly, the members of a
household were not obliged to invite other branches of their own
lineage to the minor life crises, although they might do so if they
wished.

613 The enangar played their most important role at the pre-puberty
588 marriage rite. Every ten to twelve years each lineage held a grand
ceremony in its oldest ancestral house, at which time all immature
girls of the lineage of one generation were ritually married by men of
enangar groups. This ceremony, called *tālikettukalyānam* ("*tāli*-tying
ceremony") had to be performed for each girl before puberty on pain
of her excommunication from caste (Gough, 1955). Before it took
place, elders of the assembly selected suitable youths of the enangar
lineages as ritual bridegrooms for the girls. At the ceremony each
bridegroom, in the company of representatives of every household in
the neighborhood, tied a gold ornament (tāli) round the neck of his
bride. Each couple was then secluded in a room of the ancestral
house for three days and nights, during which, if the girl was old
enough, sexual relations might take place. On the fourth day the
bridegrooms departed. They had no further obligations to their brides
[885] and did not need to visit them again unless they wished. After the
tāli rite, however, a girl was regarded as having attained the status
of a mature woman, ready to bear children to perpetuate her lineage.

Shortly before or after puberty she might, following the ceremony, 588
enter without religious rites into sexual liaisons with one or more 836
men of her own or an appropriate higher caste. Similarly, a Nayar 564
man (whether or not he had ever performed the tāli rite) might enter 613
into relationships with any number of women of his own or an appropriate
lower Nayar caste.

These marriage customs are further discussed below. Here it is 613
relevant to point only to the role of the *enangan* bridegroom. Since 564
the enangar stood to the lineage as formal representatives of the local 588
caste group, it seems appropriate to interpret the tāli rite as a ceremony 182
of group marriage, in which the caste group as a whole married
the immature girls of the lineage as a whole.

The tāli rite was indeed both a religious and a legal transaction
between the lineage and the enangu or neighborhood group. If a [688]
girl was discovered to have attained puberty before it had been performed,
the assembly forced her property group to expel her and to
perform her funeral rites, for she was thought to be ritually dangerous
to her caste as a whole. For a woman, the tāli which she wore round [885]
her neck until death was therefore a sign that she had been ceremonially
and legally accepted as a mature woman of her lineage and
caste, "cleared" to bear children to perpetuate both groups.

The lineage similarly operated as a unit, and the enangar fulfilled 613
similar roles as formal links with the caste on the occasion of a 564
funeral. All adult males of the lineage who were junior to the deceased 764
attended his cremation, which took place in the southwest
corner of the garden of his house. Representative members of all [783]
enangar households also came to help with practical tasks and to
provide ritual objects for the chief mourner's ceremonies, although
they were forbidden to touch or to receive food from the mourners
throughout their period of pollution. In the fifteen days after the 765
death only the deceased's household, assisted by their special enangar 613
households, took part in the collection of the bones and ashes and 783
made offerings to the departed spirit. Other lineage members observed 782
death pollution in their homes and were attended by enangar
there. On the fifteenth day the lineage reassembled at the house of the
dead. After many ceremonies its members were purified by the funeral
priest from the pollution of death. On the sixteenth day final offerings
were made to the spirit. The deceased's household then held a large 613
feast, which was shared by lineage members and representatives from 765
all houses of the linked lineages. This reception of food by the enangar 564
from the hands of the deceased's matrilineal kinsmen marked a 783

564 formal recognition that the bereaved lineage, freed from its death
765 pollution, had been received back into the normal social life of the
783 caste.

Lineage members were also united in worship of their lineage
613 goddess or *dharma devi* ("goddess of moral law"). This goddess,
776 named differently in different lineages, was a species of the common
794 Nayar goddess Bhagavadi. Her idol was housed in a small shrine near
the oldest ancestral house or sometimes in the courtyard of the village
temple. She was believed capable of inflicting or withholding sickness
[782] and all types of misfortune. To ward them off, members
propitiated her with offerings of cooked food every year. The astrologer
might also advise an emergency propitiation. She had the power
[588] to bless women of the lineage with fertility. On this account she was
[842] worshipped before a tāli rite and also at the first menstruation ceremonies
of a girl. In a somewhat vague sense, moreover, lineage members
appear to have felt themselves collectively responsible to the
[753] goddess for sins or ritual lapses on the part of one of them. It was believed
that if any member failed to observe the religious laws of
826 caste, to perform household duties correctly, or to revere the goddess,
[784] she might bring sickness or misfortune upon the lineage as a whole.

613 In spite of this sense of collective moral responsibility, the evidence
is unclear as to whether the lineage as a whole was held legally
681 responsible for any of its member's acts. It is true that the enangar
564 were the legal representatives of the local caste unit in its relations
with the lineage. This inter-lineage relationship was hereditary and
obligatory. It could not be entered into or permanently broken without
the consent of the assembly and the chief of the district. If,
moreover, an individual infringed a religious law of the caste, it was
[692] the duty of his lineage's enangar to summon a caste assembly to judge
[823] and punish the offense. Crimes, which were also sins, against caste
law included incest within the lineage; dining or sex relations with
prohibited lower-caste persons; failure to perform the marriage rite
of a girl before she reached puberty; failure to observe pollution at
the birth or death of a lineage member or (on the part of an individual
woman) during menstruation; failure to pay dues in kind
to the Nayar temple of the neighborhood. On being apprized of an
offense, the assembly's first recourse was temporarily to ostracize the
offender's household from the caste community. Ostracism meant
that the offenders might not enter the temple, bathe in public bathing
pools, enter the houses of other Nayars, employ the village servant

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castes, or receive customary help from their enangar at life-crisis 681
ceremonies. If the ostracism was not effected it was believed that the 564
whole neighborhood would fall into disfavor with the caste goddess [784]
and might become prey to epidemic or crop failure.

The point on which I am uncertain is whether the lineage as a 613
whole was ostracized, or whether other branches of the lineage
normally retained their caste status by severing their own connections 681
with the offender's property group. The latter actually occurred in a 684
case in Cochin in 1924. A Sudra Nayar woman had sex relations with 564
a man of the caste of Nayar funeral priests. Shortly after the assembly
met, the other houses of her lineage repudiated all connection with
the offender's household, which alone remained ostracized for a year.
The woman and her lover then fled to Malaya. The household paid its
fine and was reaccepted to caste. I do not know whether it was possible
under native rule for a lineage to repudiate its responsibilities
in this way.

Minor offenses, such as dining with low-caste people, were settled 613
by the offender's property group paying a fine to the village temple. 681
The offender and his household were purified from their pollution by
certain ritual acts. They then gave a feast to their enanger at which 564
they were publicly reaccepted to caste. Traditionally, graver offenses [783]
(such as the one above) met harsher penalties. The caste's judgment [574]
on such an offense traditionally had to be ratified by the district
chief or by a royal officer. The offender was then either executed by
his immediate matrilineal kin or surrendered to the king for sale into
slavery. His household members performed his funeral rites and only
then were they taken back into caste.

Whether or not the lineage as a whole was held collectively responsible
for offenses against the religious law of the caste, it was
not held responsible for civil wrongs judged by the village headman
or for crimes judged by the chief or by officers of the royal court. The
property group, headed by its kāranavan, and not the whole lineage,
was responsible in cases of theft, debt, or other offenses concerning
property which were judged by the village headman. With regard to 613
a major crime, a Nayar who murdered another was tried in the court
of the king or of a higher chief. If the murdered man was of the same 682
or a higher caste than the murderer, the murderer was executed by a [696]
small group of Nayars selected by the judge. If the murdered man was
of lower caste, the murderer's property group had to pay a fine to
the district chief. Again, if a Nayar of any rank committed treason

613 687 Again if a Nayar of any rank committed treason against the king, the king might order the execution of all members of his property group. Their land escheated to the royal lineage, but apparently no reprisals were made upon the lineage as a whole.

613 627 In spite of these laws of the kingdom a tradition did persist that the lineage of an offended Nayar had the moral obligation to avenge him (Logan, 1951, I: 169). Folk songs tell of blood feuds (*kudi-paga*) between lineages which apparently neither king nor chief could always quell, although the blood-feud tradition is not nearly so important as in North Malabar, where political centralization had advanced less far. In the central kingdoms feuds between commoner lineages and between village headmen's lineages could be most easily cut short by the higher authorities. Feuds between district chiefs' lineages were harder to quell and sometimes turned into small wars between districts, in which each chief amassed his feudal following behind him (K. M. Panikkar, 1929: 9). However, even in the twentieth [178) century under the British legal system, protracted estrangements have sometimes existed between two retainer lineages of the same neighborhood, which would periodically break out in armed assaults between representative individuals or even, occasionally, in murder. In recent years inter-lineage conflicts concerning assault and libel have also often been waged in the urban law courts.

Three institutions existed through which kings and chiefs seem to have tried to handle and curtail inter-lineage aggression. During wartime the problem was presumably less acute because the soldiers were away from their villages fighting large battles under their feudal lords. But wars took place only in the dry season; in the monsoons extensive military operations were impossible. Instead, each wet season saw a period of intensive military training in village gymnasia. Intermittently in this season, champions of lineages, of villages, and of chiefdoms went to joust at chiefly and royal palaces for the entertainment of their lords. Thus, first, these occasions may have helped to canalize intersegmentary conflict in a manner conducive to the royal peace.

Second, if a Nayar assaulted another or insulted his lineage, the offended man might challenge him to a duel. On payment of a fee to the chief, each disputant brought one or several champions from his lineage to fight on his behalf. Each pair fought until one or both was wounded or killed. A duel might be postponed as long as twelve years until the two lineages had trained champions to their satisfaction (Logan, 1951, I: 170). Often it was not fought by the original disputants. Duels seem to have been fought mainly to avenge the honor

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of matrilineal kinswomen against accusations of incest with a lineage 613
kinsman or of adultery with a low-caste man. Interestingly, these two 627
forms of slander still occasion the bitterest inter-lineage disputes in 835
modern villages. 837

Third, if a Nayar murdered another of the same rank, his lineage 613
kin had the customary right to carry the corpse into the courtyard of 682
the murderer's property group and burn corpse and house together. The royal and chiefly powers seem to have sanctioned this act as a form of private vengeance while reserving for themselves the right of trial and execution of the murderer.

In the law of the kingdom, therefore, the lineage was not recog- 613
nized as a unit having legal responsibility for its members' acts. The state vested it with no property and no internal structure of authority. Its members were not required to accept responsibility for one another's crimes and civil offenses nor were they accorded the right of unrestricted vengeance. They were merely *permitted* (probably as a concession to more ancient custom) to support one another in certain restricted situations, provided they acknowledged the superior authority of the kingdom's judicial agents.

I have written of lineages as groups of true matrilineal kin, and 613
so they often were. However, some procedure seems to have been 182
found necessary to adjust the lineage system to the territorial organization. We saw that segments might hive off to other neighborhoods; this must have become more common as sales of landlord and tenant rights increased during the period of European trade. My informants in one Cochin village told me that traditionally, when a lineage segment moved to a new village, its members were adopted as retainers and tenants by the local landlord. They were accepted into the assembly of their new neighborhood and permitted to perform their first tāli rite jointly with some established lineage. Presumably they also took over the enangar of this lineage. In any case my informants thought it would be necessary to obtain the sanction of the chief or, in areas of temple management, of a Brahman legal authority called a Vaidigan, to obtain new enangar ties within a neighborhood. The joint performance of the tāli rite set up a bond of fictitious matrilineal kinship between the old lineage and the incoming segment so that their members had thenceforth to observe exogamy.

This procedure served to provide newcomers with ceremonial and marriage partners and to induct them into the microcosmic political life of the neighborhood. The new members, however, were apparently never completely accepted as "true" matrilineal kin. Thus death and

613 182 birth pollutions were not extended to them by their host lineage. Instead, as we have seen, they continued to observe these rites for several generations along with their clansfolk elsewhere.

The information on this procedure is incomplete because it does not take place in modern times. It is not known whether a lineage segment ever became incorporated into a new retainer caste as well as a new neighborhood, although this seems unlikely. It is not known whether an indigenous lineage which shrank to the size of one small property group ever allied itself in putative matrilineal kinship with another established lineage. It is also uncertain whether major segments of a very large lineage might over time break the pollution bond and gradually cease to observe exogamy. Some evidence from a Cochin village suggests that this may have happened. Shortly before my stay a man and woman of two lineages which had the same enangar and had never been known to marry, entered into a traditional type of informal marriage relationship. Elders of the village then began to wonder whether the lineages had not once formed one lineage, either by true matrilineal kinship or by joint performance of the tāli rite. As they were unable to foist their doubts on to the junior generation the marriage persisted. Thus, what may once have been an ancient tie of lineage and clan exogamy was quietly broken. I do not know whether fission within a lineage was traditionally possible or whether it occurs only in modern times, when the neighborhood assembly and the lineage itself are both disintegrating.

THE PROPERTY GROUP

613 592 *Structure* The property group among Nayar retainers was a segment of the lineage having a time depth of some three to six generations, including the youngest members and the common ancestress. It therefore typically comprised a group of brothers and sisters (real or classificatory), together with the children and daughters' children of the sisters. This group was the joint-property-owning unit. Its members were from birth equal co-parceners in the buildings, land, movables, serfs, and all other property which had come to them from their matrilineal forebears, or had been conferred on them by their feudal lord, or had been acquired by the efforts of individual members. The group's oldest male member (kāranavan) was its legal guardian and represented it in the caste assembly.

When spoken of in its own right the property group, like the lineage, was called a taravād. When spoken of as a segment of the lineage it was called a *tāvari* (literally, "mother's line"). Tāvari could also be used of any intermediate segment of the lineage or of a mini-

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mal segment of one mother and her children within the property 592 group. Each property group usually had a separate garden name in addition to its lineage name.

Residence Among retainer Nayars of this area a property group usu- 613 ally owned only one homestead and was simultaneously a dwelling 591 group. Occasionally among retainers, however, and more commonly 592 among chiefs and village headmen, a property group which increased in size might build two or more homesteads on its lands. If the houses were adjacent they were usually occupied indiscriminately by members and cooking was done only in one. If the homesteads were some distance apart each might be occupied by a minimal segment of the group. The kāranavan would manage the resources of the whole group but would allocate provisions separately to each household. Separate cooking would be carried on.

Spouses lived separately in their natal units, with the husband visiting the wife. We shall call this type of residence *duolocal.*

A traditional homestead of retainer or village headman's rank cen- 342 tered about a large main building with two stories, separate staircases [351] for men and women, and, in the middle of the building, a small courtyard open to the sky. The house faced east, and was fronted by a spacious veranda, used normally by men of the group and their male visitors. Within, a passage led to the central courtyard, round which rooms opened off on three sides. They included an ancestor shrine; [778] several storerooms containing clothing in boxes, metal vessels, jewelry, [352] weapons, and paddy (unhusked rice) in large wooden chests; one or more rooms for everyday use, each with sleeping mats, a bench, [844] wooden stools and chests, and a rope to hang clothes; and a small [841] room occupied by women during their delivery and menstrual seclusions. A roofed cloister with pillars ran between the open courtyard and the rooms. Beyond the courtyard to the west was a long, narrow dining hall with a large kitchen behind it. Behind this lay the back veranda, normally used only by women and children. Upstairs might be four or five bedrooms in which women received their husbands. Men born into the group seldom entered these upstairs rooms and were forbidden to use the women's staircase.

Outside the house in the outer courtyard a separate building served [343] as a granary for paddy. The upstairs of this building was often set [351] aside for the kāranavan's use. Here he slept, was served with food by women of the house, entertained co-villagers, and kept records of the group's economic transactions. If the group was large a second separate building was often reserved to junior men for reading, en-

342 tertaining friends, or sleeping when they were not visiting their wives.
[343] A cowshed a few yards from the residential buildings completed the
arrangements in a normal retainer homestead. In village headmen's
342 and chiefly households whose women often had Brahman husbands
556 a separate building with its own kitchen was set aside to entertain
the men when they visited their wives.

[357] The buildings and outer courtyard were surrounded by a shady
garden of coconut, jack, cashew, and mango trees. Chiefs and village
[312] headmen had a private bathing pool with stone steps round it in their
own gardens. Retainers more often bathed in the large public bathing
[515] pools attached to the temples and reserved for "clean" castes of the
village. Men and women bathed and swam daily on opposite sides of
the pool.

351 In the southwest corner of the garden an open space was set aside
613 as the property group's cremation ground, entered only at funerals.
[764] In another corner was a dense shrubbery devoted to the snake gods
776 of the group. Offerings were made there to small stone images of
782 cobras, and if real cobras appeared they were regarded as manifestations
825] of these deities.

A high bamboo fence surrounded the whole establishment. It was
entered through a wooden gatehouse within which armed men might
592 sit on guard in time of war.

241 *Economic Activities* The property group obtained almost all of its
subsistence from garden and paddy lands held on tenure from the
427 village landlord and cultivated by Tiyyar sub-tenants or by Pulaya
613 serfs. The property group surrendered part of its produce in kind as
433 dues to the landlord. It retained part for maintenance, stored part for
repayment to its serfs as daily subsistence, and gave portions twice
annually to the village servant households. Tiyyar tenants retained
enough for their own needs, but gave the bulk of their produce to
their Nayar masters. Increasingly during the period of European trade
[439] the property group also sold spices and coconuts to Muslim middle-
[432] men in exchange for cash or cloth. The cash was used to buy brass
and silver vessels, gold ornaments and jewelry, and other luxury goods
[431] from the towns. The property group gave some cloth to its serfs
and tenants at festivals once a year.

613 The kāranavan managed all these transactions and controlled the
592 group's estate. He might allocate specific tasks of management to
juniors, but no payment was made on behalf of the group, no crops
[465] were sold, and no goods were consumed without his consent. Junior
men serving in the king's wars received small daily cash sums on an

individual basis, but this money seems only to have sufficed for their 613
food and other necessities while on the march or on service in towns. 592
When they were at home in their villages their kāranavan assumed [465]
responsibility for each man's customary gifts to his wives in other [431]
households.

Within his own household the kāranavan personally allocated their 613
subsistence to its members. Every few weeks he transferred quantities 592
of unhusked rice, vegetables, and other stores from the granary to 511
storerooms inside the house. They were then usually taken over by the eldest woman, who kept keys to the storerooms and chests and allocated daily supplies to the kitchen. In property groups with more than one homestead the kāranavan delivered quantities of paddy, salt, and coconut oil twice annually to each house according to the number of its members. Each house sent a person daily to the ancestral house to bring fresh vegetables, milk, buttermilk, and other perishable foods. In all taravāds the kāranavan controlled purchases from the town. Twice a year—at New Year and at the harvest festival—he distributed clothing to both male and female members.

Virtuous kāranavans were those who managed the daily affairs of 613
the taravād with thrift, justice, and meticulous care, but who, through 592
judicious planning, were able to lavish grand feasts upon caste members, 574
tenants, village servants, and serfs at the major life-crisis rites. An aged kāranavan would enumerate with satisfaction the various feasts at funerals, tāli rites, and first-menstruation ceremonies which he had satisfactorily conducted. Each of the servant castes contributed appropriate goods or services in advance of these feasts, and each Nayar house reciprocated the hospitality when its own life-crisis rites came round. Besides reaffirming in a ceremonial manner the different types of ties between Nayars and between Nayars and the lower castes, the life-crisis ceremonies seem to have stimulated production and provided suitable foci for acts of economic redistribution and reciprocity.

The amounts of time spent by junior men of the taravād on different 613
activities are no longer clearly known. We know however that at the 868
age of seven a boy was inducted into military training in the village [902]
gymnasium; this training persists in a few villages, and includes fencing,
wrestling, rigorous exercise, and very strenuous massage. Traditionally, [564]
Nayars also learned archery from a special caste of village
servants (Vil Kurups). For a part of their time they attended a village [875]
school run by yet another caste of schoolteachers (Eruttacchans); [872]
almost all adult Nayar men and most women were literate [212]

613 in Malayalam and some became famous poets during the sixteenth
868 and later centuries. A Nayar received his arms from his feudal lord
[212] —a village headman, a district chief, or a prince—at the age of sixteen.
From this time until, perhaps, late middle age, he seems to have
[702] spent periods of each year away from his village attending military
[726] exercises in the larger towns or fighting in the continual wars against
the North Malabar chiefdoms, Walluvanad, or Palghat, or between Cochin and Calicut themselves. Evidently Nayars also spent long periods in their villages, at least in the monsoon seasons, for they policed the villages, arranged village festivals, were bailiffs on the landlord's domain, and paid regular visits to local wives. Nayar youths were also obliged to attend with their seniors and fulfill ceremonial obligations
[182] at the life-crisis rites of the landlord family. The rites were of course
[439] conducted in a grand manner and served as a focus for the collection and redistribution of perishable goods throughout the village.

613 Nayar youths also did some cultivation of vegetables and spices in
868 the gardens of their taravāds. Every youth received a rigorous training
241 in cultivation methods, land management, the keeping of accounts, and the construction of houses, either directly from his kāranavan or, more usually, from the brothers of his own mother. However, there was no clear-cut allocation of differential authority and economic roles among the junior men of a taravād in this area. This was evidently not necessary because the bulk of the work was done by tenants and serfs, whose management could be most easily controlled by a single experienced man. It was enough that a young Nayar should learn *how* to manage and to cultivate so that he might one day replace his kāranavan. Their military duties were obviously the important ones for junior
[701] Nayars. It is unfortunate that we know next to nothing about how they were organized in the army, or even if they fought in lineage groups under the leadership of their mothers' brothers. All we know is that they were for the most part recruited in lineages, with the members of one lineage serving the same feudal lord.

613 The division of labor between the sexes was less rigid than in most
462 Hindu castes, but was well demarcated in daily life. Girls played with boys, attended the village school, and even received training in the
[588] gymnasium, until they underwent the tāli rite, usually at about the age of eleven. After this they were segregated from the men of their lineage and concentrated their time on domestic tasks. For most purposes the group of matrilineally related women formed a single work unit under the informal authority of the oldest (or oldest competent) woman. She gave out produce for cooking and allotted to each woman

in her care particular daily tasks in connection with cooking, house- 613
work, the pounding of paddy, and the tending of small children. The 462
minimal unit of one woman and her own children, although having a
special solidarity emotionally, was given very little recognition in the
division of work. Women cooked communally in the kitchen, bathed [296]
and washed their own and any children's clothes in company in the
bathing pool, and at the harvests moved in household groups to the [243]
fields to help the serf women of their families in cutting paddy. Nayar
women's agricultural work, however, was subsidiary and they took no
part in the more arduous tasks of transplanting and weeding.

The women of a Nayar retainer lineage also owed services to women 613
of the landlord household to which their lineage was attached. Al- 566
though their lower-caste rank prevented them from touching their mis- 357
tress or entering her kitchen, they swept the house, accompanied its
womenfolk to their bathing pool, and did various household chores.
The landlord household normally chose three or four favorites from
among the lineages attached to them to perform these services, but
women of any retainer household might be summoned during the
special preparations for a feast.

Authority and Responsibility Property groups, rather than lineages, 613
were the main legal units within the local caste group. Their kārana- 592
vans formed the neighborhood assembly. Within the assembly, a
kāranavan acted on behalf of his property group in managing the [692]
Nayar temple, settling small civil disputes in his own and lower castes,
and adjudicating in cases of offense against Nayar religious law.

A kāranavan also represented his property group in its relations with
its feudal lord and with higher authorities of the kingdom. We have [423]
seen that the property group and not the lineage held land on tenure
from its landlord, and that although a lineage was attached to a land-
lord by hereditary right, the landlord conducted all economic trans-
actions separately with the head of each property group within it.
Similarly, each kāranavan was required to represent his own property
group in ceremonial attendance on his village landlord, the chief of
his district, or (if he were a direct vassal of the royal lineage) his
king, at religious festivals associated with the temples of these digni-
taries.

On behalf of his property group, a kāranavan was held legally re- 613
sponsible for his juniors in most types of legal offense. He paid their 592
fines from taravād funds if they were found guilty of petty theft or 681
debt before the village headman or the chief. If a member of the tara-
vād was convicted in the royal court of treason, his kāranavan and [687]

613 592 681 [687] [703] his whole property group might be put to death. Conversely, the property group as a whole was rewarded for extraordinary military valor on the part of one of its members. In a period of conquest of a new district, the king sometimes removed from office recalcitrant village headmen or even chiefs of the enemy side and replaced them with property groups from among his own following. Again, when a soldier died fighting with exceptional bravery, his chief sometimes rewarded his property group with a plot of land held on a special military tenure, under unusually favorable terms.

As we have seen, the property group had the prime responsibility for an individual convicted by the neighborhood assembly of offense against the religious laws of caste.

613 592 681 692 The kāranavan's day-to-day authority over his juniors was conferred upon him by his feudal lord, backed by the judicial authority of the king. He had the right to command and discipline all junior members. In cases of extreme disobedience he might inflict corporal punishment on the women or children, or cause a junior man of the taravād to do this. He seems to have had the right temporarily to expel from the household and to deny maintenance to junior men who insulted or disobeyed him. As manager of the estate he also had disciplinary rights over the taravād's tenants. In serious matters the tenants had recourse to the village headman, perhaps to the chief, but their own master settled minor disputes among them and fined them for small offenses. In law a kāranavan appears to have had complete rights of life and death over his property group's serfs. A very few cases are recorded of his exercising it to the full. More common are the stories of extraordinary loyalty between serf and master, especially of serfs who died fighting to defend their lords' homes. Their spirits were rewarded with a place in the taravād's ancestral shrine.

613 592 681 692 703 It is clear that whatever his *de jure* authority, the kāranavan's *de facto* authority was greater over women and children than over junior men, who were often absent on military service. It seems probable that at these times soldiers came under the direct legal control of officers of the kingdom and that in at least some contexts their property groups were not held responsible for them. We know for example that if a Nayar soldier murdered another he was tried in the court of the king or of a feudatory prince and, if convicted, was executed promptly by four or five of his peers, presumably without his property group being consulted or punished. Thieves caught within the boundaries of coastal towns seem to have been similarly dealt with (Barbosa, 1518, quoted in Ayyar, 1938: 284–286). It may be that their

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property groups were held legally responsible for Nayar men only 592
when they committed high treason or when they became engaged in 681
disputes and offenses within the neighborhood of their birth. 692

It seems probable that the kāranavan's powers over his juniors and 703
over their property were limited by the codification of law which came 174
about during British rule (Aiyar, 1922: 33–132). It is not clear whether 613
he could traditionally alienate land without the consent of other adults 592
of the taravād; during British rule he could not. British law also per- 671
mitted appeal to the court by junior members for the removal of a 177
kāranavan who could be shown guilty of gross mismanagement. He could then be set aside in favor of his immediate junior. An inefficient kāranavan could moreover be forced by the court to maintain accounts of his income and expenditure. Since 1933 in Malabar District and 1938 in Cochin, all kāranavans have been legally obliged to do this and to make available their accounts for inspection by junior members once a year, as provided in the Madras Marumakkattayam (Matriliny) Act, 1933, and the Cochin Nayar Act, 1938. However, few juniors avail themselves of this right, which is evidently repugnant to the traditional ideals of obedience and trust toward elders of the taravād.

Even traditionally, however, both junior men and women were often 613
consulted in the management of the group's affairs. If a dispute arose 578
between minimal segments of the taravād it was common for appeal 692
to be made to an arbitrator of the caste from outside the lineage. The 592
settlement agreed upon would be embodied in a document called a *kārār*, which legally bound all adult members. In large taravāds the allocation of separate houses and sometimes even of separate land to each segment was usually embodied in a kārār. All land continued to be managed by the kāranavan, but he paid a sum of paddy each year to the senior woman of each household from the land allotted to her segment.

Kārārs were, however, common only in village headmen's, chiefly, 613
and royal property groups. Too little property was usually involved 592
in the case of retainer Nayars, among whom effective daily management was divided between the kāranavan and the oldest woman. As we have seen, the former carried out all formal transactions outside the group, controlled the estate *in toto*, and disciplined men and boys. The latter organized feminine tasks and held more informal authority over women and small children. When the kāranavan was the son or younger brother of the eldest woman, management usually ran particularly smoothly. The oldest woman might indeed be *de facto* head

613 of the group, maintaining its accounts in her own hands and counsel-
592 ing the kāranavan on his transactions with outsiders. When the oldest
woman was the kāranavan's own or classificatory younger sister or
sister's daughter her role was unequivocally subordinate and a formal
division of duties was common.

613 *Rites of the Property Group* The property group jointly invited en-
592 angar households to the ceremonies of name giving, first rice feed-
796 ing, first menstruation, and death. The lineage as a whole held the
tāli rite in its oldest house. However, expenses were divided between
the property groups and food was cooked separately in their homes.
613 Similarly, at a death the whole lineage observed pollution and at-
592 tended the cremation, the gathering of bones on the seventh day, and
764 the purification and feasting on the fifteenth and sixteenth days. But
men and women of the deceased's own property group offered cooked
rice to the spirit in their courtyard each day during the pollution pe-
riod. The rites of chief mourner were performed by the junior man
considered most closely related to the deceased—her eldest son in
the case of a woman, and the man immediately junior to him in the
property group in the case of a man.

613 The propitiation of cobra gods and of dead matrilineal forebears
592 also united the group's members. The cobra deities (*nāgas*) could
776 inflict or avert sickness in general but were especially believed re-
842 sponsible for the fertility or barrenness[7] of taravād women. If a
782 woman failed to conceive, a performance was held at which men and
women of a wandering caste called Pulluvar played instruments and
787 sang songs to entice the cobras to appear. A group of women of the
[753] taravād, who had purified themselves by sex continence and fasting
for several days, then became possessed by the snake gods. They per-
formed a wild dance, bowing and swaying in a circle and sweeping
their hair along the ground. In this condition they might speak with
the voices of the gods and announce whatever propitiations were nec-
essary to appease them. Sometimes one or more of the women fell
into a trance.

776 It seems reasonable to suppose that the snake gods were worshipped
842 as phallic symbols. They were definitely not regarded as the spirits of
dead matrilineal forebears, yet were capable of withholding fertility
or of causing women to conceive. Perhaps, therefore, they symbolized
the procreative powers of past genitors of the property group, who

[7] Snake gods inflicted barrenness; the lineage goddess inflicted miscarriages and sickness in childbirth.

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had been so essential to its perpetuation, yet so firmly excluded from 842
its everyday affairs.

Within each Nayar house one room was devoted to the spirits of 769
dead kāranavans. It contained a number of small wooden stools on 778
which spirits were believed to come and sit. The ancestor shrine of 613
the lineage's oldest house contained many stools placed there in turn
for the kāranavans of past generations, reaching back to the foundation of the lineage. A newer house would contain only the stools of
kāranavans of that house. Offerings of cooked food were made before [782]
each stool by the living kāranavan, in the presence of all members,
twice a year. The kāranavans' spirits were vindictive rather than
protective. They were prone to punish the taravād with sickness or financial loss if any of its members failed in details of ritual performance, in care of the property, or in piety toward matrilineal kin. I 769
have suggested elsewhere (Gough, 1958) that the cult of dead matri- 613
lineal forebears served as a focus for aggressive impulses which had 182
their origin in relationships with living matrilineal elders. At the same [154]
time it united the living in fear and reverence of the dead and reaffirmed the moral laws of the taravād. It also acted as a sanction [626]
against a kāranavan's own exploitation of his juniors, since the maintenance of right relations with junior kinsmen formed part of his pious
duty to his forebears.

The Splitting of Property Groups Genealogies and property docu- 613
ments reveal that during the nineteenth century the property groups 592
of retainer Nayars divided at a particular point in their development. [175]
This occurred when the property group comprised two or more discrete segments descended from sisters, each segment containing an adult male capable of becoming kāranavan of his branch. For a segment to be "discrete," its founding ancestress, whether herself living or dead, must not have a mother, brothers, or mother's brothers alive. Separation before this point was not possibly because the division of property was stirpital. Individual men, the managers of property, could not separate themselves from their own mothers or sisters. A man could therefore never be a member of a different property group from that of his own mother's mother's brother, mother's brother, or brother. Division could take place only between groups headed by men from different minimal segments (parallel cousins, a man and his classificatory mother's brother, etc.), who were no longer held together by submission to a common mother's brother, grandmother, or great-uncle.

613 592 174 It seems probable that the property groups of retainer Nayars divided somewhat earlier in their development during the nineteenth century than during the period of native rule. The reason for this is that during British rule Nayar men, having no other compulsory work, considered themselves old enough to become kāranavans by the age of thirty to forty, provided their appropriate elders were dead. In the traditional period, presumably, a man would be in arms until at least the age of fifty and would be unlikely to press for kāranavanship before that age.

613 592 161 174 [175] Further differences in the patterns of division of property groups must have arisen from the marked increase in population during British rule. This is not documented until after the 1870's but from genealogies it appears to have begun between four and five generations ago. The increase would mean that more women, and a higher proportion of women, would have had enough living children to become the founders of discrete lineage segments during their lives or shortly after their deaths. Thus property groups in the nineteenth century would divide not only at an earlier point in their structural development but also more frequently than was the case during native rule.

613 592 174 423 The absolute size of traditional property groups was limited by the amount of land available to each. It can be roughly gauged by the size of the houses they left behind. It seems unlikely that a traditional retainer property group would contain more than twenty-five to thirty people, or fewer than six.

Interpersonal Kinship Relationships

121 I describe the relationships between kinsfolk as these have existed in the recent past in the most "traditional" households, making reference to earlier periods when this is possible.

WOMAN-SON

593 [858] The relationship of mother and son was the strongest in the system in the sense of mutual obligation and the expectation of mutual love. A man should place the needs of his mother above those of all other kin. A woman should show equal concern for her children of both sexes, but it was expected that her primary attachment would be to her sons.

[853] [863] [867] A woman's obligations to both daughters and sons in their early childhood included breast feeding to the age of two or three, care, especially in sickness, and instruction in cleanliness and in the manners and morals of their caste.

ners and morals of their caste. She might discipline them with slaps 593 and scolding but was usually indulgent. She taught her children to [861] look to her brother as their authority, and might either report their conduct to him or (more commonly) try to shield them from his cor- [604] rection. A woman's duties to her adult son were to assist in cooking for him, to serve him with food along with other men before she and other women had eaten, and to assist in care of the house. She should offer him counsel and comfort, respecting his wishes but attempting to dissuade him from wrong. Her own moral conduct in the village [626] was a part of her duty to her children. If she infringed the religious laws her shame fell also on them and they were the most likely persons to be visited with supernatural vengeance. A woman should accept the suggestions of her adult son with regard to her conduct. If he became her kāranavan she theoretically owed him obedience in law.

A child should respect his mother's teaching, although strict obedience to her was not demanded before the age of five or six. Throughout her life he should revere her, remembering that he owed to her his membership of his taravād and all the birth-status rights of his caste. For her sake he should maintain right relations with his matrilineal kinsfolk, submitting to his male elders and protecting his sisters and their children. A man should protect his mother from slander or physical harm. When he entered the village after an absence he must go first to greet her. While he stayed there he should live in his natal house and make himself available to his mother's requests. He should not incur her jealousy by visiting a wife for long periods in the daytime, or by eating frequently in the house of a wife or of friends. In all things he should place his mother's comfort and the interests of the taravād above his private concerns. In her old age he [769] must offer comfort and companionship to his mother and after death must perform funeral rites and make annual offerings on behalf of her soul. Neglect of the mother by an adult son was the height of impiety. The lineage goddess was believed to inflict sickness on an [776] impious son. [753]

The etiquette of behavior between mother and adult son required 593 mutual respect and a certain restraint on both sides. Each stood when 576 the other entered the room, although they might later sit together and converse informally. They discussed questions of property and the affairs of the taravād in serious confidence, but undignified gossip and talk touching on sexual matters were prohibited between them.

WOMAN-DAUGHTER

593 A woman was her daughter's immediate mentor and moral authority
throughout her life. Whereas a son entered the company of men and
boys after about the age of seven, a daughter returned to her mother's
[868] intimate care after the tāli rite. From her mother and from older
women of the taravād a girl learned cookery, household and child
care, manners, morals, and minor agricultural work. As her daughters
came of age a woman took personal pride in their dress, jewelry, and
[864] physical attractions. It is said that formerly mothers and other matrilineally
related women instructed girls in the arts of love. A woman
should spend her life in her mother's household, and she should
obey her, taking over from her more and more of the household responsibilities.
[769] She should defend her mother in disputes with other
women, offer her companionship in old age, and perform funeral and
anniversary rites for her soul after her death.

A daughter replaced her mother in the social structure and was expected
[843] to resemble her in character, as indeed she often did. A woman's
constant care for her daughter's welfare became particularly
prominent during the latter's pregnancy and parturition, when the
mother must be at hand to offer counsel, good food, and medicines.
So long as they respected her and did not encroach on her authority,
she should welcome her daughters' husbands with cordiality. If, however,
[606] a husband's conduct gravely displeased his mother-in-law, she
[596] had the right to ask her daughter to reject him. A dutiful daughter
would usually do so; if she refused, the mother might place her case
before the kāranavan and request that the husband be dismissed.

Behavior between mother and daughter was usually informal, and
they had few secrets from one another. In the privacy of their home
and in the absence of men, matrilineally related women of today discuss
their affairs and their neighbors freely, sometimes with hilarious
[578] mimicry. Mother and daughter were expected to have occasional
quarrels. Indeed, there was often a deep undercurrent of rivalry between
them which might break out into acrimonious mutual scolding.
A daughter should bear patiently her mother's reprimands, but
even though she struck her mother in anger her bad conduct would
be forgiven more readily than the neglect of a son. A mother would
also often try to shield her daughters from anger on the part of the
kāranavan, of the mother's own brothers, or even of her sons. Mother
and daughters usually maintained unity in disputes with other segments
of the taravād, and it was axiomatic that mother and daughters
stand united in disputes with other households.

WOMAN-SISTER'S CHILDREN

A woman and her sister's children should behave toward each other 604 so far as possible in the same way as a woman and her own children. A motherless child was brought up collectively by his mother's sisters, usually attaching himself in particular to one of her younger sisters. As a member of their household who stood in a maternal relationship to them, a woman expected reverence, companionship, and practical help from her sisters' sons and a measure of obedience, companionship, and coöperation in domestic tasks from her sisters' daughters.

Terminologically and behaviorally, the mother's sisters were differentiated [601] by age in relation to the mother. The mother's older sister received more respect than the mother, especially if she was the oldest woman in the household. Her role approximated that of the maternal grandmother after the latter's death. The mother's elder sister usually had children of her own by the time ego was born. She tended to advise ego's mother on how to care for him rather than tending him intimately herself. The mother's younger sister's role, by contrast, approximated that of a much older sister. Before she had children of her own, she often played the part of a long-suffering nursemaid and usually remained a favorite throughout her life. A mother's younger [551] sister who was younger than ego was called by her personal name and treated as a younger sister.

Theoretically, attitudes proper toward the mother should be extended [601] to all women of her generation within the lineage and clan. Actually, [602] a rather sharp distinction was drawn between "mothers" of [613] ego's own property group and those outside it. Behavior which was [614] axiomatic within the property group became a matter of polite etiquette toward more distant kinswomen. Within the property group two or more sibling groups descended from sisters might oppose each other in adulthood. When the maternal grandmother and all males of [578] senior generations were dead, their disputes might culminate in division of the property even while their mothers were living. Such inter-segmental disputes created strains in the relationship with the mother's sisters, but these ought not to become apparent in open quarreling.

WOMAN-DAUGHTER'S CHILDREN

A woman had strong control over her daughter's children. Her authority 603 surpassed that of the mother and she retained the last word in matters of feeding or of care in sickness. At a time when her daughters were absorbed in childbearing and in relations with their husbands, she was deeply concerned for the future of her taravād as a group and

603 took upon herself much of the moral training of her grandchildren. It
[869] was chiefly from the grandmother that children learned religious mythology and stories from their taravād's history. If she was the oldest
woman of the house and if her son was kāranavan, a woman of strong
personality might virtually direct the household, protecting the grandchildren both from their mother's indulgence and from their uncles'
[861] displeasure. She seldom inflicted corporal punishment but was obeyed
by young children more readily than the mother. As they grew to
[858] maturity a woman tended to show indulgent pride in her grandsons
as the pillars of her old age. By contrast she might show jealousy of
her granddaughters and be a harsher judge of their manners and
morals than was their mother.

MAN-SISTER'S SON

604 A kāranavan had special rights in and obligations to his sisters' children, some of which have been detailed. As their legal guardian he
429 exercised the rights and obligations which normally accrue to the
legal father in the higher patrilineal castes of India. He was respon-
604 sible for his nephews' training in the laws and morality of their caste,
86 in literacy, in agricultural work, and in military skills. Much of this
training he often dispensed in person either before or after he became
kāranavan. He was responsible for maintaining the junior men of his
taravād and for guarding and, if possible, augmenting the ancestral
property on their behalf. In turn they owed him obedience, loyalty,
and submissive respect. A kāranavan might inflict a beating on a disobedient nephew under about the age of sixteen or might order a
younger brother to do this on his behalf.

604 Relationships with all mother's brothers within the property group
were modeled on that with the kāranavan. A man owed all of them
respect and obedience within the framework of the kāranavan's jurisdiction. Often a boy's junior mother's brothers were absent from the
taravād. When they were home the mother's own brothers took a
special interest in him. They might play with him indulgently until
he was about the age of three. After this he learned to respect them,
to be quiet in their presence, and to fear his mother's report of his
ill conduct to them. As he grew older it was usually from his mother's
own brothers that a boy received detailed training in agricultural mat-
[561] ters and it was they who most frequently chastised him. Throughout
their lives a man owed obedience and loyalty to all men of senior
[613] generation in his taravād, and after their deaths, regular offerings
[769] in propitiation of their spirits.

[576] The etiquette of behavior between a man and his mother's brothers

was formalized to the point of avoidance. A boy or man might not touch his mother's brother. Before entering the uncle's presence he removed his upper clothing as a mark of respect. He might not speak first to the uncle but stood with arms folded and head bowed, attentively awaiting commands. He might not sit before his uncle except at mealtimes; he then sat down last and rose as soon as the uncle's meal was finished. When summoned for a lengthy interview he stood half hidden behind a pillar, holding his hand before his mouth lest his breath should reach the hearer. He might not chew betel leaves, smoke, spit, or use any but the most serious and respectful language in the presence of his senior. These rules of intercourse were most strict in the relationship with the kāranavan. For this reason a kāranavan absented himself as much as possible from family gatherings, living on the upper floor of the granary among his age mates of other lineages who came to visit him. With junior mother's brothers, who were more intimately responsible for his education, a youth's behavior was necessarily more relaxed. Even so, he observed the greatest possible formality, walked several feet behind them, and avoided them when he could. 604 576

A man should show loyalty to his mother's brothers in relations with outsiders, if necessary defending them with his life. He was expected to identify with them, receiving and perpetuating the noble traditions of his taravād. In fact Nayars did show great pride in the elders of their taravād as a group, exhibiting their virtues and hiding their weaknesses in the presence of strangers. There was regularly, however, deep hostility in their interpersonal relationships. The Nayars of today are well aware of this and expect acrimonious rivalry between the men of a taravād; hence, they say, the need for formal etiquette and strict ranking on the basis of age. A Nayar will speak of himself as bound to his taravād through natural love for his mother and sisters, and obliged for their sakes to maintain outward decorum in his relations with matrilineal kinsmen. In a modified form this suppressed hostility traditionally extended to all the men of the own, first ascending and second ascending generations. All male elders in the taravād might be collectively called *kāranavar* (singular, kāranavan). Within the property group they were numbered in order of age (irrespective of generation) as first, second, and third men. All owed loyalty and obedience to those above them and protection to those below them, but all envied their seniors and feared the rivalry of juniors. The mother's own brothers were, however, the prototypes for this generalized rivalry. Whether or not Nayars experienced Oedipal hostility 604 613 604 613 561 578

604 613 561 578 to the mother's husband in their earliest years, there seems no doubt that a great part of their hostility to male elders became focused on the mother's brothers by about the age of five, and that much of it remained conscious. Thus occasional stories are told today of nephews who poisoned or stabbed their mothers' brothers and it is often remarked that kāranavans are "hated" and that "their position is not safe." Such tales of violence are regarded as shocking, but they do not arouse the horror with which a Hindu of the patrilineal castes would receive a story of patricide.

604 561 578 Relationships with the mother's mother's brothers were less intense and rivalrous than with the mother's brothers. Until the age of three or four a small boy might be a playful visitor to the room of the great-uncle who was his kāranavan. Often, this elder died while he was still small, so that the boy retained only affectionate memories of him. Otherwise he learned to behave with even greater formality to this elder than to his mother's brothers. He saw the great-uncle less often, however, and was seldom directly punished by him, so that the relationship tended to remain one of distant geniality.

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MAN-SISTER'S DAUGHTER

As the head of her taravād a kāranavan owed his sister's daughter maintenance, shelter, and legal and physical protection. At her tāli rite and during her subsequent marriage relationships, only the sexual rights in a woman were lost to her taravād. All other rights, in her procreative powers and domestic services, remained vested in her taravād, represented by its kāranavan. He could command her obedience in the performance of household and minor agricultural work. [429] [684] He automatically became the full legal guardian of children born to her legitimately. If she seriously infringed the religious laws of her caste, for example, by having sex relations with a man of lower caste, it was his duty to expel her from the taravād and his right (very occasionally exercised) to put her to death by the sword.

604 584 595 178 In the nineteenth century, when monogamy gradually became customary, a kāranavan arranged the marriage of his sister's daughter. In earlier periods Nayar women seem to have exercised considerable freedom to select or reject their husbands. A woman might not, however, oppose her kāranavan's right to dismiss an unwelcome husband.

604 All the mother's brothers of a woman had the right to command her domestic services and to discipline her in minor ways. As in the case of a boy, they might play with her until she reached the age of three or four, after which they became somewhat feared authorities. [861] A man might occasionally beat his sister's daughter, until the age of

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seven or eight, but he would not inflict heavy punishment unless he [861]
was sure of the child's grandmother's and her kāranavan's support.
After she had undergone the tāli rite a man was forbidden to touch [588]
any junior woman of his taravād. His relationship with his sister's
daughter thereafter became very distant. In accordance with rules 604
associated with incest prohibitions, he might not be alone in a room 576
with her and would scrupulously avoid suspicion of intimacy. He would absent himself when her husband entered the house, remaining on the outer veranda, in the separate men's building, or in the house of his wife. A woman must remain standing and remove her upper clothing when her mother's brother entered her presence. She must not speak first to him, must not laugh in his presence, and must respond with extreme submissiveness to his requests. When possible a man would communicate advice to his sister's daughter through some kinswoman senior to both of them. Thus, except to serve him with food, a woman had little direct intercourse with her mother's brothers.

Modern Nayars admit freely that the partial avoidance between 604
men of the taravād, on the one hand, and that between men and 613
women junior to them in the taravād, on the other, have quite dif- 182
ferent foundations. The former is a defense against aggression, the 561
latter against desire. Nayars partially avoid their younger sisters and nieces, it is admitted, because otherwise they might be tempted to
commit incest with them. As things are, in speaking with others, men 604
often express a respectful tenderness toward their sisters' daughters 613
and a pride in their qualities. Because of the difference of sex, and therefore of ambitions and interests, there is much less potential conflict here than in the relationship with the sister's son. By an orthodox kāranavan in particular, its young women are seen as the fine flower of his taravād. Whatever may be his more selfish inner feelings, he expresses gladness when there are many of them to perpetuate his matrilineal group. For their sakes and for the sake of the heirs they may bring him, he welcomes their husbands to his home. When the latter are aristocrats of higher caste, his pride seems the more easily to outweigh any potential hostility toward them.

In orthodox homes today, women's attitudes to their mothers' broth- [578]
ers seem to be variously compounded of fear and admiration. A woman fears her uncle's anger and may resent his harshness toward her brothers and sons. If, however, he manages her household with equity and if his reputation stands high in his neighborhood, he may become a distant hero in her eyes.

MAN-SISTER

593 Within the kinship circle, a man's concern for his sisters should come second only to that for his mother. He had greater authority over them, but he owed them similar protection and consideration. If he became their kāranavan, he must manage the property on their behalf and educate their children to the best of his ability. A woman owed her brother domestic services, obedience, and devotion. Brother
[581] and sister should, when necessary, subordinate their own marital interests to each other's comfort and welfare.

The elder sister shared something of the mother's role; the younger
593 sister, that of the sister's daughter. Indeed, as in all relationships within
561 the taravād, the significance of age surpassed that of generation; for when age and generation were discrepant the attitudes appropriate to age overrode those appropriate to generation.

A much older sister might help to bring up a boy in the same manner as the mother's younger sister. As he grew to maturity her attitude combined sharp criticism with maternal solicitude. When both were adult, however, difference of sex became a greater determinant of authority than did difference of age. Although she might continue to speak informally with him or even to upbraid him mildly, the elder sister stood in her brother's presence and received his commands with respect. If he became kāranavan, the younger brother's ultimate legal authority was unquestioned. His sister might, however, remain his trusted counselor for life.

Until her tāli rite a girl played freely with her elder brothers and
[588] was affectionately patronized by them. After this time an outer formality was required between them, identical with that preserved toward the sister's daughter. Inwardly the relationship was expected to be more intense, with less authority and more tenderness on the part of the brother, less fear and more devotion on the part of the sister, and today, in speech with others, young childless women often
[604] display a simple hero worship for their elder brothers. As a woman's children grew to maturity, her brother's discipline of them might
[578] create tensions in the sibling relationship. She should, however, continue to submit willingly to his wishes. A man who was not her kārana-
[586] van had no right to dismiss his sister's husband from their home. Nevertheless, a woman who knew that her brother deeply disliked her husband would feel it her duty to reject him.

593 The very formal behavior required between a man and his younger sister is consciously related to incest prohibitions. Sibling incest is
835 in fact very rare and was traditionally punished by death. Enough

cases are known in modern times however to show that the temptation 593
was real. The reasons for the partial avoidance between men 835
and younger women of the taravād apparently lie in the descent
system. Brothers, in common with other men of the taravād, owned the
procreative rights in a woman. They shared property and a home with
her and were jointly the guardians of her children. With all these
shared interests a strong devotion to her was axiomatic and inevitable.
Yet brothers must forswear completely the sexual rights in their sister
and surrender these to other men. Their formalized, partial avoidance
of their younger kinswoman facilitated their continued devotion, side
by side with the sexual prohibition. At the same time it completely
segregated their interests in her from those of her husbands and thus
made tolerable the relationships between brothers-in-law.

Life histories and the behavior of small children suggest that a 593
man's near-conscious attraction toward his sister is a displacement of 835
his earlier and more intense Oedipal attachment to his mother. The
latter is apparently repressed at about the age of five, together with 154
similar motives toward other older matrilineal kinswomen. It is uncertain
whether Nayar boys developed Oedipal hostility toward their
mothers' husbands in early childhood. Perhaps they did, for a child [855]
shared his mother's sleeping room until the age of three or four and
must have witnessed parental sexual relations. If Oedipal rivalry did [104]
develop, much of the hostility seems to have been displaced toward
the mother's brothers as they became the significant authorities in
the child's world. There is in any case a realistic basis in the mother's
brother's hard discipline for aggressive motives toward him. Mythology
and religious rites suggest that these two forbidden motives—aggression
toward older matrilineal kinsmen and desire for union with
matrilineal kinswomen—remained powerful throughout a man's life.
It is therefore easy to see why observance of the rules of formal
etiquette toward older men and toward younger women of the
taravād represented, for a Nayar, the essence of familial piety. The
rules counteracted his deepest unsocialized impulses and made possible
the harmonious coöperation of the matrilineal group. It is reasonable
also to conclude that tensions arising within this natal group must
have been eased by the fact that aggression and sexuality, sternly
prohibited within the lineage, were encouraged outside it in warfare,
organized dueling, and very free sexual relationships.

A man's hidden concern for his sister's sexuality seems to have 593
found an approved outlet in the jealousy with which he was expected
to guard her from any taint of contact with low-caste men. Organized

593 Organized duels as well as illegal battles between lineages seem to have been
578 fought chiefly to vindicate a kinwoman from the unproven charge of
613 cohabitation with a man of low caste, or to protect her from any form
of obscene slander. Such approved forms of aggression against Nayars
154 of other lineages may have provided outlets for a brother's sexual
jealousy, which he might show only covertly toward his sister's
684 socially recognized husbands. If, on the other hand, a woman were
finally judged guilty of sexual relations with a man of low caste, the
law permitted her brothers to vent their jealous fury by putting her
and her lover to death.

BROTHERS

561 The relationship between brothers had much in common with that between a man and his sister's son. Age rank was of the greatest significance: even twins, or classificatory brothers born on the same day, were mutually ranked in terms of birth order, the elder preceding the younger in succession to the kāranavanship. Brothers near in age played together in early childhood, but toward adolescence their behavior became formalized to the point of partial avoidance. The elder might command the junior to do small tasks for him. A much older brother might inflict corporal punishment within the limits set by the kāranavan's authority. In general, a man's etiquette in the presence of his brother was the same as that shown to the mother's brother. A man whose elder brother was also his kāranavan treated him with even greater respect and when possible avoided his presence.

The social distance required between brothers must have been made possible by the fact that they were often absent from home, and that, when home, they had little need to coöperate in work. In modern times a man who resides with his elder brother or mother's brother usually works independently outside the taravād, spends much time in his wife's house, and restricts his intercourse with his senior to mealtimes and to formal consultations concerning their property. Unfortunately we do not know what, if any, was the structure of authority or the division of functions between brothers who traditionally fought together in war.

593 Great rivalry was admitted to exist in the relationship between
578 brothers. They were thought of as bound to the taravād through their mother and sisters, rather than directly to each other. At the same time, sons of the same mother could be expected to support each other in conflicts with children of the mother's sister, while both sibling groups might experience a common resentment of their maternal uncles' authority. In broader contexts, the men of a property

group supported each other firmly in disputes with other property 593
groups of the lineage, while the men of a lineage were expected to 578
defend each other to the death in outbreaks of violence against other
lineages.

Inter-segmental conflicts between classificatory brothers, or between the men of a sibling group and their mother's classificatory brothers, eventually led to division of the taravād. This could not, however, take place until the men of all generations senior to the disputants were dead. As long as the taravād was obliged to cohere, the formalities associated with age rank between men countered
incipient tendencies to segmentary fission. Men were ranked by age 593
irrespective of segment and generation, and the same etiquette of 561
formality and partial avoidance was due an elder own brother as to
an elder classificatory brother. Thus the etiquette of age rank not 578
only reduced the dangers of open violence between individual "brothers" of any degree of relationship; it also *enforced* estrangement and social distance between full brothers, who in some contexts might otherwise have huddled together in unseemly amity to plot against their classificatory brothers in other segments of the property group.

SISTERS

Sisters shared many experiences and interests. They played together 593
in childhood and often experienced the tāli ceremony together. As
adults they cooked, swept, pounded paddy, harvested, and cared for
babies together. Women were in some respects ranked on the basis
of age in the same manner as men. All who were older had some [561]
authority over all who were younger. A younger sister was not permitted to receive a visiting husband until after one had appeared to claim her elder sister's or elder classificatory sister's favors.

However, the age ranking and authority structure between women 593
was less formal than that between men. Women had no legal authority 562
over one another. All women of a household were legal minors, col- [592]
lectively under the authority of the men of their household, repre-
sented by their kāranavan. Women had no place in the caste as- [564]
sembly and might not give evidence in trials. Disputes between [623]
women of different households or different lineages were not con-
sidered serious matters for public consideration. Women could not [578]
legally represent their households in relationships with other households, other castes, or political authorities.

For these reasons older women had only moral authority over 593
juniors. They could not enforce their decisions except by appeal

593 to the kāranavan. Even in relation to small children they tended to
seek the backing of a brother to maintain discipline in the home.
Old women who had passed the menopause had the greatest authority.
They could move freely about the village, travel alone on pilgrimages,
and wield influence over their younger brothers and sons.
[562] But even old women in some contexts found themselves united with
their juniors as a group of legal minors under the command of a male
authority.

Under these circumstances the mutual behavior of women was intimate and informal. Their joint tasks, carried out in the confined space of the kitchen, encouraged this intimacy. Further, as natal kinswomen they were habituated to each other from birth. Unlike a woman and her daughters-in-law in a patrilineal household, their group membership was unitary and they experienced a continuity in major roles and loyalties from birth to death.

593 If she were competent, the oldest woman of the household delegated
its tasks, allowing flexibility for seasonal variation and unusual
561 occurrences. Generally, girls who had not reached puberty ran
461 errands between houses, did small outdoor tasks, and played with
their younger siblings. The younger married women shared the heavy
work of pounding paddy, milking cows, cleaning dishes, and most of
the cooking. Old women had pride of place in the kitchen and living
room. They supervised cookery, occupied the best seats, and controlled
their juniors' consumption of betel leaves, areca nuts, and
tobacco from the family box. Elderly mothers took pride in serving
their children and grandchildren with food on birthdays. In a large
house young married women had considerable leisure and privileges.
Through the day they took turns visiting the village bathing pool in
couples, an event which gave opportunity for gossip and allowed them
to be seen by (although not to converse with) the men of neighboring
[422] groups. Old women proudly distributed the taravād's jointly
owned jewelry among the young and marriageable women, helped
[613] them to apply cosmetics and to dress their hair, and obtained a
vicarious satisfaction from their marital conquests. For a few years
—until she had several children—a young woman's life was gay and
not overburdened with work. Women of childbearing age also had
[841] periods of respite from the kitchen. They were secluded in an inner
room for three days during menstruation and did no household tasks
[844] for ninety days after a birth. In these conditions the division of labor
was not strict and the segments descended from women were not
segregated in their functions. Women wielded most control over their

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own daughters and grandchildren, but sisters "stood in" for one 561
another in caring for their children and contributed their work in a 461
manner conducive to the general welfare.

Between sisters, especially own sisters, there was deep personal 593
affection as well as loyalty to the sibling group and to the taravād.
Sisters were also rivals, often squabbling over jewelry, clothing, and [578]
favors. Both rivalry and affection were most intense between sisters
close in age.

Most women died in their ancestral homes among their siblings and children. Only a woman whose forebears and brothers were all dead might move away from her sisters into a separate property group
headed by her son as kāranavan. Even so, sisters often lived to experience covert disputes between their children, who looked forward [578]
to the day when they would separate into new branch taravāds. In the last resort sisters would support their own children in quarrels, although they tried not to become involved in such disputes but to preserve their mutual amity.

MARRIAGE

The taravād was obviously of very great strength as an economic and 613
legal corporation. Correspondingly, marriage was the slenderest of 581
ties.

Every ten or twelve years, the immature girls of one generation 613
within a lineage were ritually married on the same day by men drawn 588
from their enangar lineages. Before the ceremony the girls were secluded for three days and caused to observe ritual prohibitions as
if they had menstruated. (The actual rite of tying the tāli or gold [585]
ornament around the bride's neck is the central rite of "normal" marriage among most of the patrilineal castes of South India.) After the tāli rite, each couple was secluded for three days in a room of the ancestral house. Their seclusion clearly marked a ceremonial if not an actual defloration, and travelers' accounts of the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries indicate that the brides were actually deflowered at this time (Stanley, 1865: 24; Kerr, 1811: chap. 6; Hamil-
ton, ed. Penzer, 1930, I: 174). During the seclusion period, rites were [842]
performed to the goddess Bhagavadi to enhance the girls' fertility. [776]
On the fourth morning each couple took a purifying bath and ate a meal together. In Calicut and Walluvanad, although apparently not in Cochin, each bridegroom then tore in two the lower cloth worn by the girl in the period of seclusion. He kept one half and handed the other to the girl. Their personal obligations ended, the bridegrooms left the household.

613 588 If he wished, a girl's ritual bridegroom might later visit her as one of a series of husbands, but he had no prior claims and was not 765 obliged to do so. The woman in turn owed no obligations to him except that at his death, she and all her children by whatever bio- 983 logical fathers must observe fifteen days of ritual pollution for him. Ritual pollution was otherwise observed only for matrilineal kin. Until modern times it was not observed by a woman and her children for a visiting husband who was not also the woman's ritual husband. 601 In addition, if they knew him, a woman's children called her ritual husband by the Dravidian word *appan*, the term used for the father in the patrilineal castes. Their mother's visiting husbands they called by the Sanskrit term *acchan;* this word means "leader" or "lord" and was also sometimes applied as a title to village headmen and military leaders.

836 837 564 After the tāli rite and shortly before or after puberty, a woman might enter into a number of sexual relationships with men of her local caste group or of an appropriate higher caste. Similarly, a Nayar might visit a number of wives of his own or an appropriate lower Nayar caste. Among retainer Nayars, by far the majority of unions were between persons of the same caste. A very few favored women had husbands from the lineages of temple servants, village headmen, chiefs, or royalty, or from houses of Nambudiri Brahmans of relatively low rank. A smaller number of Nayar retainers had wives in the lower-ranking castes of Nayar temple menials, but not in the servant castes of Nayar washermen and barbers, which were endogamous.

595 837 175 It is not certain how many husbands a woman might have at one time; various writers [*] of the fifteenth to eighteenth centuries mention between three and twelve (Logan, 1951, I: 136–137). Others add that women "never refused themselves" to occasional Brahman or Nayar visitors of appropriate rank. It seems probable that each woman had a small number of husbands from her local caste group who, while their relationship lasted, visited her regularly, but that women also received occasional fleeting visits from itinerant Nayars of appropriate rank, perhaps mainly during military operations.

113 [*] See, for example, Abdu 'r Razzak (1441), Nicolo di Conti (1444), Hieronimo de Santo Stephano (1563), and Cesar Fredericke (1563), in Hakluyt Society Publications Vol. 22, 1857; Duarte Barbosa (1518) and Joao de Barros (early sixteenth century) in Dames, 1921, II: 124, 241; Ludovico di Varthema (1503–1508), tr. J. W. Jones, 1863; 146; Zein-ud-Deen (1579), tr. Rowlandson, 1833: 63; J. H. van Linschoten (1598) in Hakluyt Society Publications Vol. 71: 279; Pietro della Valle (1624), Hakluyt Society Publications Vol. 85: 379; Hamilton (1727), ed. Penzer, 1930, I: 310; Buchanan, 1807, II: 411.

A husband normally visited his wife after eating supper in his 595
natal home, and left before breakfast. Even today in many orthodox
Nayar homes men eat regularly in their taravāds and accept food in
their wives' homes only on special invitation from their wives'
kāranavans. Traditionally a husband placed his weapons outside his [201]
wife's door as a sign to other men that he was within. My informants
in a Cochin village reported that, within living memory in the late
nineteenth century, if two husbands called on the same night the one
who came last might sleep outside on the veranda. Usually a woman's
regular husbands knew each other and informally agreed upon their
turns.

The relationship with the visiting husband was called *sambandham* 585
(Sanskrit, "joining together"). At the start of a girl's first sambandham 595
her husband came to her house privately at night, sometimes with a
few friends of his own age. In the presence of the girl's kin he presented
her with a white cloth of the kind worn as a skirt. The occasion
was not marked by feasting. Later husbands might or might not
present the cloth. A transient visitor is said to have left a gold coin
beneath the woman's pillow, and a regular husband might do the
same on the first night of his union.

While his relationship lasted, a regular husband was expected to 595
make gifts to his wife at the three main festivals of the year. Vishu, in 431
April, was the Malayalam New Year; Onam, in September, was a [796
harvest festival; Tiruvadira, in December, was a women's festival to]
Kama Devan, the god of passion. The gifts were of bathing oil, [776]
bananas, wafer biscuits, and betel leaves and areca nuts for chewing.
In some areas a husband also gave a loin cloth of superior quality at
Onam. The gifts were prepared by women of the husband's taravād, [613]
and he should present them in person to each of his wives on the
festival day. If a husband failed to make these gifts it was a tacit sign [586]
that he had ended the relationship. It should be noted that the gifts,
trivial in value, were gifts of courtship and were in no sense maintenance.
Bathing oil is a feminine toilet requisite; wafer biscuits are [302]
delicacies served at feasts; and the giving of chewing materials between [262]
a man and a woman is everywhere in South India associated [276]
with courtship or with the first night of marriage. A husband had no
obligation at all to maintain his wife, for she received her food, [584]
shelter, and regular clothing from her taravād. [585]

The only other obligations of a husband came at the birth of a 843
child. When a woman became pregnant it was necessary for one or 595
more men of appropriate caste to acknowledge possible biological 431

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595 paternity. This they did by making gifts to the woman herself and
to the midwife immediately after the birth. Any man who had visited
431 the woman in the appropriate time period was required to make
these gifts. If a man refused, he could be called upon by the caste
assembly to fulfill his obligation. The gifts comprised two new
lower cloths for the mother and one cloth and a quantity of paddy
as payment to the Nayar woman barber who attended at the de-
843 livery. Again, these gifts were clearly legal and ceremonial tokens
595 rather than objects of substantial economic value. Legally, however,
their transfer was of the utmost significance. For if no man would
431 consent to make the delivery payments, the woman was assumed to
684 have had sex relations with a man of lower caste or with a Muslim
or a Christian. Her caste assembly would temporarily excommunicate
her taravād until she and her child had been driven out by their
kāranavan and the woman's funeral rites had been performed. The
woman, presumably with her child, might be executed by her
matrilineal kinsmen or allowed to become a slave of the district chief
or the king. If the woman and her lover were publicly exposed even
before the birth of the child, both might be put to death.

595 A woman had no obligations to her husbands other than the
593 granting of sexual privileges. Nayar husbands of the woman's own
caste occasionally dined in her household but this was a favor and
564 not a right. Nayar households sometimes provided uncooked food
and a separate building for Brahman or chiefly husbands, but this
again seems to have been a matter of courtesy rather than of obliga-
[431] tion. Husbands of higher caste made the same gifts to their wives
as did Nayar husbands.

595 In the nineteenth century her kāranavan selected a woman's first
584 husband, and he may have done so at earlier periods. Until the
1930's many kāranavans also retained the right to dismiss a husband
586 who displeased them. It seems improbable, however, that a woman
613 or her kāranavan would ever refuse the visits of a Brahman, chief, or
[837] village headman of powerful standing in the community. In some
cases also a husband of higher caste seems to have monopolized the
[564] favors of a Nayar woman, a privilege not accorded to men of her own
caste. K. Kannan Nair reported (1908: 186) that until a century
previously local chiefs sometimes compelled a woman to receive as
husbands those of her enangar who wished to marry her. In general,
however, women seem to have been free to reject particular men, and
both men and women to terminate liaisons without formality.

000 In all possible respects attempts seem to have been made to reduce

In all possible respects attempts seem to have been made to reduce
the intensity of marital ties for the sake of the unity of taravād, 595
village, and kingdom. Good men were men who devoted themselves 613
first to the service of their feudal lords, and second to the welfare of 577
their taravāds. Weak and immoral men were men who became in-
veigled by their wives and their children, so that they tried to make
unnecessary gifts to their wives and neglected their taravāds. An ideal
kāranavan was one who broke off his marital ties in old age and de-
voted his energies solely to his sisters' children. Institutional recogni- [593]
tion of emotional attachments between spouses was reduced to a 595
minimum. If a man by accident died in his wife's house his body was
immediately brought home for cremation by his lineage kin. After a 764
man's death his current wives were permitted to come and view his 613
corpse. They were then ceremonially conducted out from the north
side of the house—the side opposite to that from which the god of
death had come. They must not look back at the house of death and
they might never visit it again. They and their children took no part
in the funeral or the subsequent anniversary rites nor did they observe
death pollution.

In spite of the institutional precautions, undoubtedly some men 595
formed strong emotional attachments to particular wives and their
children. The institution of sorcery came into play at this point 754
(Gough, 1958). Among Nayars, sorcery was practiced mainly against 613
affines; it was ineffectual within the lineage. It was believed to be 593
practiced most by junior members of a taravād against the matrilineal
kin of their kāranavan's wife. The reason was that if he were particu-
larly attached to a wife, the juniors of a kāranavan might fear that he
would transfer to her gifts and cash which belonged legally to his
taravād. They could not make their complaint in law, for the
kāranavan was their legal representative. Instead, they are said to
have secretly engaged low-caste practitioners to recite spells and
make offerings to some minor malevolent deity with the object of
bringing sickness upon the wife or her kin. If they suspected such
evil doing, the members of the wife's taravād might in turn hire a
"good" practitioner of their own who would appeal to some other
deity to return the misfortune to the senders. It is clear that Nayars
did hire "good" practitioners to perform countermagic against af-
fines; whether in fact they hired evil practitioners to perform sorcery
in the first place is uncertain. At all events the institution of sorcery [754]
provided a covert outlet for interpersonal hostilities between affines
which could find no expression in open conflicts between their groups
as a whole. The result of the hostilities was often termination of the [586]

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754 particular marriage, for the spouses, unable to bear the machinations
613 of their relatives, would often end their relationship.

I have called these Nayar institutions "marriage" because they
586 limited and regulated sexual relationships and because they served
581 to legitimize children. The provisions of both the tāli rite and the
588 sambandham were directed toward these ends. The tāli rite was both
a legal and a ritual institution. First, it symbolically conferred sexual
and procreative powers upon the girl. The mock menstrual seclusion,
the rites to the fertility goddess, and the "defloration" all indicate this.
Second, it took the sexual rights in a girl away from her matrilineal
kinsmen as soon as they had been conferred. This appears in that the
[835] girl and her elder matrilineal kinsmen must observe the rules of
etiquette associated with incest prohibitions from the day of the
tāli rite. Third, it transferred the sexual (but not the procreative)
rights in the girl to a representative of her caste in the person of an
enangan. Fourth, however, this man at once renounced his rights in
his capacity as an individual, after which they became available to
men of the caste, and of appropriate higher castes, as a group. All of
this was accomplished in good time *before* the girl actually attained
puberty and was capable of entering fruitfully into sexual liaisons. It
[834] was strictly forbidden for a man to have relations with a girl before
her tāli rite, and if the rite was not performed before puberty she
was expelled from caste.

595 With regard to the sambandham institution, sex relations were not
834 promiscuous. They were forbidden within the lineage, within a
certain range of affines (discussed below), and, most categorically,
851 with men of lower caste. It was therefore necessary to have some
procedure for legitimizing children, to show that they had been
fathered by men standing in the appropriate roles. The legally obligatory
payments by husbands at the time of birth accomplished
this, and if no one could be found to make the payments, the woman
and child were expelled from the caste.

595 It was appropriate that a woman should wear the tāli throughout
her life and that she and her children should observe death pollution
[765] for the ritual husband rather than for any particular visiting husbands.
[785] For neither the ritual husband nor the visiting husbands had rights
in the woman *as individuals*, nor had the woman or her children individual
[564] rights in them. After renouncing his individual rights, however,
the ritual husband remained for life, in relation to this woman,
the representative of his caste, which in law had collectively married
her and collectively fathered her children.

As a form of group marriage, the Nayar institutions clearly will not 58
fit the definition of marriage proposed in *Notes and Queries in* 85
Anthropology.* It did, however, legitimize children, which seems to 12
me the minimum necessary criterion applicable to all those unions which anthropologists customarily label "marriage." As a new definition of marriage which will cover all the familiar types, the Nayar case, and several other unusual cases which are commonly recognized as marriage, I have suggested the following: "Marriage is a relationship between a woman and one or more other persons which provides that a child born to the woman, under circumstances not prohibited by the rules of the relationship, shall be accorded full birth-status rights in his society or social stratum" (Gough, 1959: 32).

Nayar men seem always to have chosen wives younger than them- 582
selves. A man ranked above his wife, who had to show respect to
him. In the presence of her kin she remained standing before him 593
and seldom spoke to him; she would not be seen talking to him in 576
public outside her home. A woman never used her husband's name;
she addressed and referred to him by plural honorific pronouns. [551]
Hypergamous marriage relationships were even more formal than
those between Nayars. Caste rules of pollution prevented the husband [564]
from receiving food from his wife's kinsfolk. During the daytime, [183]
after taking his purifying bath in the morning, he was forbidden to
touch her or any member of her family.

THE FATHER AND HIS KIN

The most peculiar characteristic of the Central Nayars is that al- 595
though a form of marriage existed they did not institutionalize the
elementary family of one man, one woman, and their children. This
group was in no sense a legal, residential, commensal, productive, or
distributive unit. An individual man had no legal rights in a particu-
lar wife and her children. He did not reside with them, did not eat
regularly with them, did not produce with or for them, and he did
not customarily distribute goods to his children. A woman had no [851]
legal rights in a particular man—only the right that one *or more* men
admit paternity of her children. Similarly, a child correctly begotten
was assured of legal paternity, but a group of men might fulfill this
role and the child had no subsequent claims on any of them. It
might perhaps be claimed that the group composed of the tāli tier,
his ritual wife, and her children born subsequently received cere-

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* "Marriage is a union between a man and a woman such that children born to the woman are the legitimate offspring of both parents" (*Notes and Queries*, 1951: 110).

595 monial recognition through the performance of death pollution, but that was strictly all.

842 Nayars did, however, understand and attach significance to the physiological role of the male in procreation. They expected a child [829] to resemble his genitor and to be unusually intelligent if his father were a Brahman or a Nayar aristocrat. A man is said to have been 593 especially fond of a child whom he knew with reasonable certainty to be his own. He would make small gifts to him, play with him on visits, and offer him friendly counsel as he grew older. However, a man had no right to interfere in any way in his child's training, and [586] the child had no customary obligations to him. If he ended his relationship with the mother he had no further contact with the child.

Children addressed all their mothers' husbands as acchan, adding [601] the caste title in the case of a father of higher caste. Both boys and girls stood in the father's presence and accorded him respect, but [564] without the extreme submissiveness due to an older matrilineal kinsman. In spite of the Malayāli adage "No Nayar knows his father," it seems probable that almost every Nayar regarded some particular man as his genitor; but his relationship with this man might be anything from a permanent, warm attachment to almost total lack of recognition. Certainly differences of paternity created no institutionalized divisions within a sibling group.

602 No rights or obligations existed between an individual and his patrilateral kin. These relationships, when they existed, were a matter of individual friendliness or of polite etiquette. A person might visit his or her father's taravād as long as the father's marriage to the mother endured, especially if the father lived close by. How[595]ever, although marriage has been monogamous for the past seventy to eighty years, I found in one Cochin village in 1949 that only 48 per cent of sibling groups containing children under fifteen had any contact with their father's matrilineal kin. In the other cases patrilateral relationships were suspended because the father lived at a distance, because he had divorced the mother, or because his kinswomen had quarreled with the mother.

[601] In what follows, the term "father" refers to any husband of the mother in the sambandham relationship, and the term "patrilateral kin," to the matrilineal kin of such a man.

Patrilateral kin of the father's generation or older were accorded [605] friendly respect. Cross cousins of the same sex and caste had a familiar, mildly joking relationship if they maintained contact with one another. If their families remained friendly, cross cousins of

opposite sex might talk to each other with rather more freedom than 602
to unrelated persons. In his role of enangan a boy sometimes tied [605
the tāli for his maternal uncle's daughter or stepdaughter of suitable [588]
age.

There were no incest prohibitions with patrilateral kin, although a 582
man was unlikely to marry his father's own sister because of age [335]
differences. Marriage to the father's or stepfather's brother or brother's son was neither prohibited nor preferred. Modern informants thought that if a girl was known to be one's father's daughter by another wife, marriage with her would be avoided as indelicate, but it was apparently not prohibited. The children of brothers were not considered related, and provided they belonged to different lineages, they might marry or not as they chose.

Bilateral cross-cousin marriage was freely permitted, with some preference for marriage to the mother's brother's daughter or stepdaughter. A kāranavan was particularly likely to encourage his nephew to enter marital relations with a daughter of the kāranavan's favorite wife. In this case it was felt that the marital interests of uncle and nephew would be harmonized and the nephew might be less likely to accuse the uncle of infidelity to the taravād if he favored his wife and her children. Patrilateral cross-cousin marriage is said to have been less favored because it did nothing to smooth the relationships between men of a taravād. It may, also, have been less common because a man had no influence in his son's choice of a wife.

It may seem strange that preferred cross-cousin marriage should have existed side by side with group marriage, for cross-cousin marriage, especially when it is arranged by the senior generation, suggests an interest in prolonging the ties brought about both by paternity and by matrilineal kinship. Group marriage, by contrast, tends to negate the claims and interests of individual fathers. Today, the fact is that cross-cousin marriage is arranged only with the child of an uncle who has had a long and satisfactory marriage relationship. It is never deliberately arranged as a first marriage, with the child of an uncle's previously divorced wife. Further, although young people
agree to arranged cross-cousin marriages, they may and fairly often [586]
do later dissolve the marriage if things do not go well. One presumes that similar circumstances existed in the days of group marriage. Many men, presumably, entered marriage relations with cross cousins only incidentally—often, presumably, without being fully aware of the blood relationship. It seems quite probable that at other times some men did have an enduring relationship with a particularly

582 favored wife, and that such a man might well arrange for a nephew's first sambandham relationship to be with a daughter of this wife. It seems probable also that such deliberately arranged matrilateral cross-cousin marriages increased in popularity in the nineteenth century, as plural marriages gradually gave place to monogamy. My [178] data suggest also that deliberately arranged patrilateral cross-cousin marriages may have become more popular in the late nineteenth century, as fathers became instrumental in maintaining and educating their sons.[10]

AFFINITY

602 592 The members of ego's father's household had less significance to him in their interpersonal relationships than as affines or *bandhukkar* (singular, *bandhu*) of his household as a whole. The bandhus or "joined ones" of a household were acquired through the sambandham relationship. They comprised the current spouses of the property group's members, together with the households from which these people came. *Bandham* (affinity) had no practical significance beyond this range.

602 [576] Because of the transience of particular marriages, affinal relationships, like those with patrilateral kin, were a matter of etiquette rather than of rights and obligations. Affines of the same caste might visit [574] each other informally and must be received with hospitality. It was also common to invite to the feasts of life-crisis rites the actual spouses of the dwelling group and any close matrilineal kin they might wish to bring with them. Affines, however, had no ceremonial obligations on these occasions and were not under the same categorical obligation to attend as were the representatives of enangar households.

602 576 Politeness—masking a greater or lesser degree of covert hostility—characterized affinal relationships in general. A man treated his wife's male elders of senior generations with respect, and stood in their presence unless invited to eat with them. They welcomed him with cordial gravity and with the respect due to his caste status if he were a man of higher caste.

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[10] Both types of cross-cousin marriage have however decreased in frequency as a result of the urbanization and mobility of the past thirty years. In one Cochin village in 1949, 7 per cent of living Nayar women had married the father's own or classificatory maternal nephew; less than 2 per cent had married the own or classificatory mother's brother's son. Taking the women of six lineages over five generations, 14 per cent of marriages were to the father's own or classificatory nephew; 9 per cent to the own or classificatory uncle's son. In Walluvanad, of the women of nine lineages over five generations, 11 per cent had married the father's own or classificatory nephew; about 5 per cent, the own or classificatory uncle's son. Patrilateral cross-cousin marriage is of course impossible in hypergamous unions.

A man's relationships with his wife's older matrilineal kinswomen 602
were less formally respectful. He might sit with them and exchange
village news. They served food to him when he ate in their house and
were the persons who usually greeted him first on an evening visit.
Although she welcomed them at first out of pride in her daughter's [606]
popularity, a woman was likely in time to become jealous of her
sons-in-law. If they were tactful they treated her with courtesy and
submitted to her whims.

A man tended to avoid his wife's sisters or classificatory sisters 607
who were younger than himself. They treated him with extreme
respect similar to that accorded to an older brother, and avoided him
as far as possible after they had reached puberty. Incest prohibitions [835]
were relevant here: a man was forbidden to have marital relations
with two women of the same household, and a woman, with two
men from the same household. These prohibitions of course partly [582]
served to prevent father-daughter incest. Marriage to a member of a
dead or divorced spouse's household was also forbidden.

These rules in general appear to relate to the need to keep minimal 602
potential rivalries between persons of the same sex within the matrilineal 578
household. They were also consistent with the relationship of
extreme respect and social distance between the men of a taravād.
Tensions between these men were sufficiently acute in any case; they
might have been intolerable if two of them had shared a wife. There [834]
was also the attitude that sexual relationships should be kept strictly
segregated from ties to matrilineal kin. A boy's matrilineal kinsmen
were even forbidden to accompany him to his bride's house at the beginning
of his first sambandham. Instead he took with him brothers-in-law,
unrelated friends, or sometimes a cross-cousin. For marriage [581]
was a gay undertaking, a matter of personal pleasure, and only men
who stood to each other in a familiar and non-authoritative relationship
might have knowledge of each others' marital affairs.

Similarly, the ban on marriage to two women of the same property 602
group is understandable in that Nayar women were open rivals for 572
the attentions of men. Many writers mention this and it is still discernible
at the present day. Apparently the respect and amity required
of women of the same household was incompatible with such
rivalry.

However, the prohibition of relations with two members of the 835
same property group was less stringent than the rule of lineage exogamy.
Nambudiri Brahmans are said to have occasionally pressed
their attentions on two sisters in spite of their family's reluctance.

835 At least during this century, moreover, cases have very occasionally occurred in which a Nayar cohabited both with his wife and with their daughter by the marriage or with his wife and her younger sister. Such affairs are viewed with disgust as evidence of extreme ill-breeding, but they do not merit excommunication or exclusion from public ceremonies, nor are the offenders expected to fall ill through supernatural vengeance. The reason appears to be that traditionally only matrilineal kinsfolk were regarded as kin in the true sense. Incest prohibitions outside this range were apparently a matter of propriety rather than of religious law.

604 A man's wife's sisters' children, like his own children, had an amicable relationship with him of mingled respect and playfulness. [588] After their tāli rite, however, girls were forbidden to touch their "fathers," own or classificatory, and relationships with these men [885] tended to become more grave.

Brothers-in-law had informal relationships. A man would defer to 607 his wife's much older brother and expect some respect from his wife's much younger brother. Brothers-in-law of similar age had a mild joking relationship. They might chew betel leaves, loll, yarn, and gossip together. A man's sisters' husbands sometimes acted as go-betweens in arranging his first sambandham and accompanied him to [578] the house of his wife. But the surface amicability of brothers-in-law often hid very deep hostility related to conflicting claims upon the woman who linked them. This might break out in quarrels or end in mutual avoidance. The wife's brother was also often instrumental in having a man dismissed from the conjugal house.

602 A woman's contacts with her husband's kin were obviously less 574 regular than those of a man. A woman never went to her husband's taravād to visit him for personal reasons but only to pay polite social calls on his kinswomen. When a man or girl began their first sambandham the man's mother and sisters customarily went to bring home his wife a few days after the husband's first visit. Often the wife's sisters would accompany her. They were given a small feast in private and the husband's mother might make a gift of jewelry to the girl before she returned home on the third or fourth day. Thereafter the frequency of feminine visits between the two households depended on the stability of the marriage, the proximity of the houses, and the personal feelings between the members. Neither husband nor wife did any tasks at all in each other's homes. Each remained always an outsider to whom polite behavior was due. Because of incest prohibitions a woman paid extreme respect to her husband's elder matrilineal kinsmen they avoided her except on ceremonial occasions.

kinsmen and they avoided her except on ceremonial occasions. She 602
had a relationship of mutual courtesy with all of her husband's older
kinswomen and was given meticulous respect by her husband's junior
kinsfolk of both sexes. The *ammāyi* (mother's brother's wife) and the 604
chēdatti amma (elder brother's wife) play a role in Nayar jokes and 607
folk tales somewhat comparable to that of the stepmother in Europe. [522]
As was mentioned in connection with witchcraft, junior members of [538]
a taravād habitually resented these women's hold over their husbands
and represented them as grasping, unscrupulous, and intent on robbing their husbands' juniors. This fear of the mother's brother's wife [184]
was however much more pronounced in North Malabar, where marriage was monogamous or polygynous and residence avunculocal.

Co-wives and the wives of brothers, being in different houses, had 607
no institutionalized relationships and apparently very little contact. 595
The husbands of women of a property group also had only slight relationships. There was no structure of authority between them because 602
they performed no activities together. The younger men accorded 592
some deference to the older, but all might sit together informally and exchange news.

Virtually nothing is known of the relationships between co-husbands 595
except the testimony of several writers from the fifteenth to eighteenth centuries that they "agreed very well" with each other. They are said to have distributed the woman's time among them in a convenient manner "according as they can fix a term among themselves" (Hamilton, ed. Penzer, 1930, I: 172).

Among the Nayars of this area, households of the linked lineages 613
or enangar fulfilled the customary obligations and carried out the 592
ceremonial roles which were required of an individual's affinal or matrilateral kin in the patrilineal castes of Kerala. It was enangar who *must* take part in life-crisis rites, make gifts at first menstruation and marriage ceremonies, and come to assist at deaths. Enangar were of course often currently affines of the households in which they officiated, for sambandham relationships took place most intensively between lineages of the local caste group. However, the enangar relationship did not derive from particular sambandham ties nor was it brought about by particular tāli rites. It was rather a hereditary relationship of "perpetual affinity" between lineages as groups, which persisted irrespective of the making and breaking of particular sexual ties. When a man who happened to have sambandham with some woman of a household acted there in his role of enangan, he did so as a representative of his lineage, irrespective of his interpersonal mar-

613 riage tie. Often, the particular persons who officiated as enangar did
592 not happen to be currently having marital relations with any member
of that house. This inter-group relationship of ceremonial obligation
fitted the fact that particular marital ties were too transient and slender
to carry the normal obligations of affinity.

Prerequisites of the Kinship System of Commoners

595 It is not definitely known how the institutions of group marriage and
175 linked lineages arose among Central Kerala Nayars. In 1518 Barbosa,
writing of the Nayars of Calicut, stated of group marriage: "And it
is said that the kings made this law, in order that the Nayars should
not be covetous and should not abandon the king's service" (Dames,
1921: 124). Similarly João de Barros wrote at about the same period:
"They say that this (polyandry) is a very ancient law among them,
and that it springs from the wish of a certain king to relieve the men
of the burden of maintaining sons, and leave them ready for warlike
[671] service whensoever the king calls upon them" (*ibid.*: 241). Whether
or not group marriage was instituted by a particular royal edict, we
know that once it had begun it was enforceable by the laws of the
Central kingdoms. Thus, according to at least one authority, a chief
could compel a woman to receive as marital partners any of her enangar
[613] who wished to visit her (K. Kannan Nair, 1908: 186). The rights
and duties of enangar in the administration of caste law were also
sanctioned by the chief and, ultimately, by the king.

595 Considerable literary evidence suggests that a form of group marriage
175 similar to that of Central Kerala existed among Nayars in at
184 least some of the chiefdoms of the kingdom of Travancore in Southern
Kerala. K. M. Panikkar, it is true, has argued that Travancore Nayar
women were never polyandrous (1918: 270–271). Other Malabari
writers, however, responding to Panikkar's statement, have argued
convincingly that they were (Aiyappan, 1932*a*, 1932*b*, 1934; Iyer,
1932). K. P. Padmanabha Menon, in particular, supports the view that
traditionally Nayar women in both Central and Southern Kerala were
"held in common, every woman belonging to all the members of the
tribe, and resistance to any of them was severely punished." In support
he quotes two early statements concerning the chiefdom of Venmani,
with its capital of Kartigapally, in North Travancore. Thus the
Portuguese Archbishop Menezes in the mid-sixteenth century reported
that "the king of Kartigapally enacted that in his kingdom any
Nair was at liberty to be free with any woman of the caste high or
low, and that he could kill a woman, with impunity, if she refuses

a favor"; and the Dutch Captain Nieuhoff observed in 1664 that "It 595
is commonly reported in these parts, that the kings of Venmani made 175
a law, by which a man was empowered to kill any woman that should
refuse him a kindness" (quoted in K. P. P. Menon, 1908: vii–viii). 184
These quotations are especially interesting because they suggest that, in Travancore as in Central Kerala, plural unions on the part of women were not merely permissible but, in theory at least, enforceable by law.

Similarly, Nayar informants of a village near Haripad in Central 595
Travancore told me that they understood that "long ago" Nayars of 175
Travancore had the institution of the visiting husband together with 184
polygyny and non-fraternal polyandry, like Central Kerala Nayars. The 178
same informants reported that during the nineteenth century, after
the Nayar armies were disbanded, residence became avunculocal [591]
among Nayars in this area of Travancore, non-fraternal polyandry died out, and for a few decades some Nayars practised fraternal polyandry, with a group of brothers assuming collective responsibility for one or more co-resident wives and their young children. Other writers also mention relatively modern cases of fraternal polyandry among Travancore Nayars (Iyer, 1932; Fawcett, 1901: 241). Later in the nineteenth century and during this century, however, Travancore matrilineal property groups began to disintegrate, and fraternal polyandry gave place to monogamy. The Central Travancore sequence of duolocality with group marriage, to avunculocality with fraternal polyandry, to partial neolocality with monogamy, is an interesting one in view of the fact that fraternal polyandry has, as far as I am aware, always been strictly forbidden among both duolocal Nayars of Central Kerala and avunculocal Nayars of North Kerala throughout the
historical period. I was able to spend only a fortnight in Travancore [114]
and could not pursue the comparison.

The marriage of a woman to more than one man concurrently is 595
not confined to the Nayars in southwest India. The double unilineal 171
Tiyyars and some other higher polluting castes of Central Kerala had fraternal polyandry, and both fraternal and non-fraternal polyandry were customary among the Toda tribe of the Nilgiri hills. The Coorgs to the east of North Kerala are also said to have had fraternal poly-
andry associated with patrilineal descent groups. The prevalence of [174]
various types of polyandry in southwest India generally suggests that *some* form of plural unions for women may have been very ancient among the Nayars, possibly predating their organization into kingdoms.

595 Leaving aside the problem of origins, however, what I would argue
182 is that the *specific* form of group marriage evolved among Central
701 Kerala Nayars in the period of the native kingdoms was particularly
adapted to their military organization, which in turn was made possible
[566] by the existence of the lower castes of sub-tenants and serfs. The
work of the tenants and serfs absolved Nayar men from the duty
of maintaining the women and children of either their natal or their
conjugal units by their own productive activities. It set free most of
these men for a lifetime of military service; in each matrilineal group
only one old man was needed at home to organize the work of the
household's retainers. Given matrilineal descent and inheritance, and
given the mobility of men and the absence of male economic obligations
to kinswomen, there was no reason why either men or women
should restrict themselves to particular spouses. There was also, as
the early European writers realized, a positive value for the kingdom
in their not doing so, for plural marriages discouraged soldiers from
forming deep attachments to particular wives and children, and encouraged
them to focus their loyalty on military leaders and on the
matrilineal groups through which they were recruited. At the same
time, plural marriages provided the soldiers with ready comforts and
a night's lodging both in their own villages and in other villages of
the kingdom through which they might pass. Whether or not chiefs
regularly enforced indiscriminate mating among Nayar women of their
districts in order to strengthen their soldiers' allegiances, a system of
group marriage involving optional multiple alliances certainly fitted
the way of life of a landed militia, already (for historical reasons)
[178 organized into matrilineal descent groups. A close connection between
group marriage and the military organization is further suggested in
that, after the British had disbanded the armies in about 1800, although
matrilineal descent persisted for over a century, group marriage
rapidly died out. Within about thirty years monogamous marriage
in Central Kerala, and monogamous or restricted, fraternally
polyandrous marriage in Travancore, had become common, and fathers
had assumed a definite role in the upbringing of their children.

Kinship in the Aristocratic Matrilineal Castes

613

THE LINEAGE

592 Among the retainer Nayars a household whose membership rose above
about thirty tended to divide its property between its segments when
423 the senior males who had spanned the segments were dead. Correspondingly,
lineages and clans of retainer Nayars went through a grad-

ual process of fission. This state of affairs was in harmony with the 613
small amounts of land controlled by retainer property groups and 592
with the relatively temporary relationship of retainer Nayars to their 423
land. The conditions of kānam tenure not only allowed for changes in the tenures of plots of land within one village, but even permitted segments of an expanding taravād to change their feudal allegiances and if necessary to hive off from their natal village.

The situation was different in the aristocratic lineages of royalty and district chiefs. By jenmam right they owned large domains which could support greater numbers of members. Their members also had a stake in the political office which they were reluctant to surrender. On the whole these lineages tended to cohere for longer periods than did those of retainers. Some of them today number over three hundred members and trace their descent back to the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. When segments of these lineages did move away from their [727] ancestral lands it was usually because they had been conquered and forced to vacate their territories and offices.

In the beginning, when one of these aristocratic lineages rose to power, it did so as a small property group. It did so either (in the case of royals) through conquest or (in the case of chiefs) through being appointed to office by some royal power. When they acquired office these upstart property groups seem to have severed ties with their former lineages and clans and to have conferred on themselves a higher ritual rank as independent castes.

After a few generations such a property group might expand in 613 numbers and separate out into segments. I lack data on the precise point at which aristocratic property groups segmented; it seems to have been always at a later point with them than with retainer Nayars. (Today, some royal and chiefly property groups have a time depth of eight or more generations and over a hundred members.) When fission did occur the segments moved into separate palaces, each taking a portion of the ancestral domain for its maintenance. The oldest man resident in each segment acted as kāranavan and managed its internal affairs. For a time at least, the political office remained vested in the oldest man of the lineage irrespective of branch. When he was able, he kept a tight hold over all the segments, deflecting part of their income to himself for the upkeep of his palace staff, private army, and the larger forces he mustered through his subordinate vassals in war. The office bearer also retained sole right to the customs [65] dues on trade within his chiefdom or kingdom, and to the tribute from village headmen within his area of rule.

613 Theoretically, office-bearing lineages were supposed to cohere for-
178 ever, the officer being the eldest man of the lineage regardless of
branch. In fact, if the lineage continued to expand, some other devel-
opment would occur within a few generations. What its pattern might
be depended on the economic and political circumstances of the times.
One pattern was for the political office itself to become divided be-
tween the segments some time after they had divided their private
domain. The head of each segment would then become ruler in his
own right over a portion of the original territory, either (in the case
of royals) as an independent small king, or (in the case of district
chiefs) as a small chief independent of the rest of his lineage but still
owing nominal allegiance to the original king of the kingdom as a
whole. This type of fission of offices took place in areas and periods in
which for some reason trade was declining, customs dues were running
low, and neither king nor chiefs could muster enough extra wealth
to fight wars which would maintain them in full political control. This
613 process went on apace from the fifteenth century to the end of the
178 seventeenth both in Kolattunad and in Travancore, the northernmost
175 and southernmost kingdoms of Kerala. They had been powerful
648 kingdoms for a period, with the help of Chinese traders, but declined
in the fifteenth century after the Chinese trade collapsed and the
Arabs built up Calicut. After 1500, different trading powers supported
the smaller chiefs of these areas in trade wars against each other, so
that these kingdoms remained weak and disunited until the second
quarter of the eighteenth century. During this period segments of the
royal lineages in both kingdoms carved up much of each kingdom
into virtually independent chiefdoms. Within each of these in turn,
the lineages of formerly subordinate Nayar chiefs tended also to
break into segments, each retaining control over four or five villages.
Early in the eighteenth century the British and French each tried to
consolidate North Malabar by allying themselves with different local
powers, but their struggles were temporarily eclipsed by invasions
from Bednur to the north and later, in the 1760's, from Mysore in
the east. In Travancore the process of disintegration persisted until
the British obtained a trade monopoly and, in the 1730's, helped the
king to reconquer his kingdom once and for all and to establish a
bureaucratic form of rule (Innes, 1908: 55–75; Pillai, 1940: 288–466;
K. M. Panikkar, 1931: chap. V).

613 The other course of development was for one branch of a ruling
669 lineage to seize the office and most of the private domains and, tem-
porarily or permanently, exclude or banish the others. This process

took place in areas and periods where one trading power was in the 613
ascendant and wished to support a strong ruler with taxes, arms, and 669
shipping, and through him to gain a monopoly of the pepper trade.
Such maneuvers went on continually in the Cochin lineage during the
period of European trade. In the late fourteenth or early fifteenth 75
century the Cochin lineage disintegrated into five property groups.
The Zamorins to the north, who were expanding with Arab aid, sup- 613
ported the Mutta ("Elder") branch, installed its head as king, and 669
made him feudatory to Calicut. When the Portuguese arrived in 1500 648
they took up the cause of the Elaya ("Younger") branch, installed
them as kings, and ousted the Elder branch and the Zamorin. By 1658
the Younger branch was dying out, as were the three other branches,
and only the Elder branch had members available for adoption. In-
stead of allowing the king to adopt from the Elder branch as they
should by custom have done, the Portuguese forced him to adopt
from an unrelated lineage, the Rajas of Bettem, who ruled between
Cochin and Calicut and who had just defected to the side of Cochin.
The Elder branch then sought the help of the Zamorin and the Dutch,
and defeated the Cochin Raja and the Portuguese in the war of 1660.
The Dutch ousted the Portuguese from Cochin port and installed the
Elder branch as their protégés on the throne. Despite such machina-
tions, the Cochin kingdom never became permanently *divided* be-
tween branches of the royal lineage, because the office of kingship,
supported by one or another merchant power, retained sufficient
funds, equipment, and men to restore control over the whole.

The Zamorin's lineage was unusual in that from at least the thir- 613
teenth to the mid-eighteenth centuries it apparently did not greatly
expand in numbers or divide into separate property groups. Indeed
it several times almost died out and in 1705 had to adopt from the
Nileswaram lineage, an offshoot of Kolattiri. There were therefore no [635]
dynastic wars in Calicut. Even had there been, however, it is safe to
say that they would always have culminated in the supremacy of [726]
one branch and not in division of the kingdom. This was because
throughout the period the Calicut port remained great. With the help [648]
of one trading power after another the kingship remained strong and,
except for border losses, was able to maintain central judicial control
and a system of differentiated political offices within the heart of the
kingdom.

Within the Calicut kingdom, which was the strongest until the mid- 635
eighteenth century, dynastic disputes among the district chiefs were 578
usually settled by the king. Succession to district chiefship and to vil-

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613 Succession to district chiefship and to village
635 headships had to be ratified by the king and he could if necessary
dispossess disaffected branches and exclude them from office.
622 This was true in the heart of the kingdom. Between Calicut and
726 Cochin, the Zamorins' perpetual enemy, lay several small chiefdoms ruled by formerly independent Kshattriya lineages owing only a tenuous allegiance to one or the other side. In the perennial wars between Calicut and Cochin disaffected branches of these lineages frequently changed sides.

622 Village headmen's lineages, again, had their successions confirmed
635 by the chief or king to whom they owed immediate allegiance. When
a property group divided into segments, the tendency seems to have
634 been for the branch having the senior member to retain the ancestral
613 house, the office, and most of the village domain. The king or chief sometimes installed a discarded branch of such a lineage in a vacant office elsewhere, if the office-bearing lineage of that village had died out. His power to do this rested on the fact that an office-bearing lineage which was dying out could not adopt without the consent of the officer of next higher rank. Lopped branches of village headmen's lineages which lost their domains and office seem to have reverted in time to the caste rank of retainer Nayars.

613 In most of the royal lineages and many of the chiefly lineages there
554 existed the institution of *sthānams*. These were titles carrying separate estates and sometimes subordinate political offices for the men next in seniority to the ruler, irrespective of branch. The Zamorin's lineage had five sthānams. The first was the Zamorin who had palaces at Calicut and Ponnani. Second came a *sthāni* (title holder) who ruled as chief of Nedunganad, a large chiefdom near the southern boundary whose former ruler had been conquered and executed. The third sthāni regularly patrolled the southern frontier with an army. The fourth and fifth had no political offices but lived on separate estates. The rest of the lineage occupied one or more palaces in Calicut. When a sthāni died, those next below him in age rank all moved up one place. The ruling lineages of Kolattunad, Walluvanad, and Palghat each had five sthānis and many of the lesser chiefs had two or three. Cochin had no sthānis other than the king, but originally the eldest male of the lineage retired into celibacy while the second ruled as
[648] king. When the Portuguese came they abolished this rule and installed the king themselves.

[182] When a ruling lineage was financially and militarily strong, sthānams strengthened its rule and helped it to cohere for a longer time than it might otherwise have done. They lifted the senior men out of their

separate segments, gave them economic independence and a share in 613 the government, and made them representatives of the lineage as a 554 whole. If the lineage separated into two or more branch property groups, their estates were managed by their senior men after the sthānis had been removed. The whole lineage might thus cohere for a number of generations. When, however, taxes ran low and the political offices became financially weak, the sthānis had a tendency to revert to the property groups from which they came and, as heads of them, to seek independent rule over a portion of the chiefdom or kingdom. Sthānams were thus an integrative device which developed when a ruling lineage was already strong. They could not maintain its strength if the economic basis of its power was removed, nor could they ultimately prevent disputes of the branches for the central office if the lineage became very large.

RELATIONS BETWEEN ARISTOCRATIC LINEAGES

Each office-bearing lineage had as its enangar one or two higher-ranking 613 lineages from the range of those within which its women were 634 wont to draw visiting husbands. Thus village headmen often had their 622 district chiefs as enangar. A district chief's lineage might have the 554 royal lineage, a conquered royal lineage, or a Nambudiri Brahman family as enangar. The Calicut royal lineage had two conquered royal feudatory lineages as enangar, and some other royal lineages had Nambudiri Brahman families. The enangar fulfilled the usual ceremonial obligations at life-crisis rites, and tied the tālis of girls. Unlike those among the retainer Nayars, these enangar obligations were not reciprocal. A district chief's lineage might thus receive enangar services from royals, but would give them to village headmen. Appropriately, the enangar relationship among aristocrats, like the marriage relationship, was thus asymmetrical. Unfortunately I lack information about whether aristocratic enangar, like those of retainers, had the right to bring to trial offenders against the religious laws of caste.

It is clear that hypergamous marriages and asymmetrical enangar 613 relations were adapted to the potential political and ritual mobility [582] of office-bearing lineages and to the fact that at any given time such a lineage might not be able or willing to acknowledge others as its equals in political or ritual rank. In most situations therefore an office-bearing lineage could act as though it formed a separate caste. There were some contexts, however, in which this was not possible. One of these was adoption. If a lineage was obliged to adopt, it had to find 613 some other lineage whose members it was willing to acknowledge as 577 peers. This problem was usually surmounted by adopting from a lin-

613 eage with which one was neither at enmity nor in regular asymmetrical
597 political relationships. Thus the Travancore royal lineage several
times adopted from Kolattiri, at the other end of Kerala, and the Calicut
lineage from Nileswaram, the northernmost independent chiefdom
of the Malabar Coast.

613 The giving and receiving of food, normally a hallmark of caste ranking,
262 presented other problems. Some royal lineages were vegetarians
564 and employed Nambudiri Brahman cooks who, being ritually higher
than themselves, were permitted to serve them with food. Others seem
to have drawn to themselves a small group of lineages as cooks and
houseservants upon whom they conferred equivalence of caste rank,
while maintaining them as their social inferiors and not intermarrying
with them.

613 RESIDENCE AND KINSHIP RELATIONSHIPS

592 The property groups of village headmen's and chiefly lineages had
593 residential arrangements similar to those of retainer Nayars, except
that their houses were larger. The men of these groups visited their
554 lower-ranking wives in the latters' homes. If they lived nearby, visits
would occur at night; if at a distance, the husband might visit his
wife about once a month and remain for two or three days. Similarly,
women of these groups received visits from their higher-ranking husbands
at convenient intervals. If he came from a distance the husband
brought his own servants and cook, occupied a building near the
taravād house, and stayed at his conjugal family's expense.

613 In the royal lineages each property group occupied a large palace.
Within it each princess had her own suite of rooms in company with
344 her children under the age of fifteen. Princes over this age had private
554 rooms in a separate wing. The Nambudiri Brahman husbands of princesses
592 (who were younger sons in their own households and had
no managerial duties) lived at the palace for the duration of their
marriages and were maintained at its expense. In the daytime they
occupied a building within the royal courtyard, with its own bathing
pool, kitchen, and servants, and visited their wives' rooms mainly at
night. Junior princes visited their wives in nearby retainers' households
or in more distant chiefly taravāds. Each royal sthāni had his
own palace, estate, and retainers for the duration of his office. He
would normally bequeath a house to a Nayar wife within the palace
grounds and visit her and his children there.

595 Although group marriage appears to have existed in theory among
554 aristocrats, polyandry was in fact perhaps less common than among
[586] retainer Nayars. Princesses are said to have been sometimes poly-

androus and divorce was freely practiced, but a princess probably did 595
not regularly entertain more than one husband at a time. Older Nambudiri 554
Brahman husbands often introduced their own younger kinsmen [586]
into the palace; for this reason both matrilateral cross-cousin
marriage and paternal parallel-cousin marriage were common in Brahman-royal
unions. Princes, chiefs, and high-ranking Nambudiri Brahmans
were sometimes polygynous. Their wives, however, were probably
seldom polyandrous; for aristocrats seem often to have exercised
the power to monopolize the attentions of their favorite Nayar wives.
They were therefore more sure of the paternity of their Nayar sons,
upon whom they sometimes conferred military or political offices.

In all hypergamous unions the husband observed the normal all- 564
India caste rules of pollution except with regard to sexual intercourse. 602
He might not receive food from his wife's caste and had little communication 598
with her or her children in the daytime. Affinal relationships 554
were correspondingly more restricted than in the retainer castes, 554 [833]
for a woman had very little communication with her husband's natal
kin; she and her children used no kinship terms for them. If the wife [783]
was of lower social as well as ritual rank than the husband she did not
visit his natal home. Conversely, princesses do not seem to have demeaned
themselves socially by visiting the homes of their ritually
higher-ranking husbands. A Nayar wife who was of similar social rank
to her Brahman or temple-servant husband might occasionally visit
the womenfolk of his home, but she was received in an outbuilding
and might not eat with them. Similarly, husbands in hypergamous
unions had highly formalized and restricted relationships with the
matrilineal kinsmen of their wives. The wives' elder kinsmen were accorded
the respect due their age; the husband, that due his superior
ritual rank.

Relationships between matrilineal kin among the aristocrats were a 602
sharpened version of those found among retainer Nayars. Between 576
men, the etiquette associated with age rank was highly stereotyped. 554
Among the senior princes who were likely to compete for political
office it reached the point of avoidance, a condition facilitated by
their separate residences as sthānis. The etiquette of respect was
similarly elaborated between men and women. After the age of fifteen
a prince might converse with older women of his palace only by appointment
and in some public place. He must scrupulously avoid the
presence of younger kinswomen from the time of their *tāli* rite. In [154]
the potentially larger property groups of the aristocrats these rules [835]
of etiquette obviously militated against the expression of aggression
between men as well as preventing incestuous
relations between the sexes.

between men as well as preventing incestuous relations between the sexes.

Kinship Terms

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As might be expected, kinship terms were used only between matrilineal kin and between ego and the spouses of members of his lineage. The terms were as follows.

A. MATRILINEAL KIN (extended throughout the lineage)

(1) *Mūttassi* ("Oldest woman"). M. and F. speaking. Woman of the second ascending generation, primarily MoMo. May be prefaced by *valiya* ("big") or *cheriya* ("small") for women respectively older or younger than MoMo.

(2) *Ammāman* ("Male mother"). M. and F. speaking. Men of first and second ascending generations, primarily mother's own brother. May be prefaced by valiya or cheriya for men of first ascending generation respectively older or younger than Mo. May be prefaced by *mūtta* ("oldest") for men of second ascending generation.

(3) *Amma*. M. and F. speaking. Women of first ascending generation, primarily own mother. Prefaced by valiya or cheriya for women respectively older or younger than Mo.

(4) *Jyēshtan*. M. and F. speaking. Men of own generation older than ego, primarily own elder brother. Sometimes corrupted to *ētan*.

(5) *Anujan*. M. and F. speaking. Men of own generation younger than ego, primarily own younger brother. Reference only.

(6) *Jyēshtatti*. M. and F. speaking. Women of own generation older than ego, primarily own elder sister. May be corrupted to *eraṭṭi* (South Malabar) or *chēchi* (Cochin).

(7) *Anujatti*. M. and F. speaking. Women of own generation younger than ego, primarily own younger sister. Reference only.

(8) *Angala*. F. speaking. Own brother by same mother. Reference only.

(9) *Pengal*. M. speaking. Own sister by same mother. Reference only.

(10) *Marumakan*. M. speaking. Male of first or second descending generations, primarily own sister's son. Reference only.

(11) *Marumakal*. M. speaking. Female of first or second descending generation, primarily own sister's daughter. Reference only.

(12) *Makan*. F. speaking. Male of first descending generation, primarily own son. Reference only.

(13) *Makal*. F. speaking. Female of first descending generation, primarily own daughter. Reference only.

(14) *Pērakutti* ("Name child"). F. speaking. Male or female child

of second descending generation, primarily own daughter's child. Reference only. 601 613

(15) *Kāranavar* (singular, *kāranavan*). M. and F. speaking. All males of the lineage older than ego, living or dead. Primarily, the eldest living man of ego's property group. Reference only. [561]

(16) *Anandravar* (singular, *anandravan*). M. speaking. All males of the lineage younger than ego. Primarily, junior males of ego's property group. Reference only. [561]

Comment: Older relatives are addressed by terms; younger, by name.

The overriding of generations which appears in terms 2, 10, and 11 is suitable because the men under 2 are not in the direct line of ascent and their authoritative roles are similar. Terms 15 and 16 further emphasize the age rank of lineage males regardless of segment or generation. [561]

The separation of terms 1 and 3 may be related to the fact that women are in a direct line of descent. Moreover, 1's role is more authoritative than that of 3.

The existence of special terms 8 and 9 points up the interdependence of own brother and sister on which the unity of the sibling group and the cohesion of the property group are based.

The merging of lineals and collaterals within each generation points up the lack of institutional segregation of one woman and her children.

B. AFFINES AND NON-MATRILINEAL COGNATES 601

(1) *Bhārya*. M. speaking. Wi in the sambandham relationship. Reference only.

(2) *Bartāvu*. F. speaking. Hu in the sambandham relationship. Reference only.

(3) *Sambandhakkar*. M. and F. speaking. Collective. Husbands of women of ego's lineage, primarily of ego's property group. Reference only.

(4) *Mūttacchan* ("Oldest father"). M. and F. speaking. Hu of A1.

(5) *Acchan*. M. and F. speaking. Hu of A3, especially of own mother. May be prefaced by valiya or cheriya according to age of the man's wife in relation to ego's mother. Followed by the caste title (e.g., Nambudiri) if he is of higher caste.

(6) *Ammāyi*. M. and F. speaking. Wife of A2.

(7) *Aliyan*. M. speaking. Reciprocal between a man and his wife's lineage kinsmen of her generation, primarily within her property group. Reference only.

(8) *Jyēshtatti Amma*. Wife of A4. M. and F. speaking. Sometimes

601 corrupted to *chēdatti amma* (Cochin) or *eratti amma* (S. Malabar).

(9) *Chētan.* M. and F. speaking, reference; M. speaking only, address. A particular shortened form of *jyēshtan* (ElBr), reserved for the husband of A6.

(10) *Makan.* M. speaking. Son of ego's wife. Reference only.

(11) *Makal.* M. speaking. Daughter of ego's wife. Reference only.

(12) *Pērakutti.* M. speaking. Child of ego's wife's daughter. Reference only. Not always used.

(13) *Appan.* M. and F. speaking. Ritual husband (*tāli* tier) of ego's mother.

(14) *Manavalan.* F. speaking. Ritual husband. Reference only.

All other affines and cognates were referred to by descriptive compound terms (e.g., *ende acchande marumakan,* "my father's nephew"; *ende anujande bhārya,* "my younger brother's wife"). Persons of 8 and 9 were also often referred to by descriptive compound terms.

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602 A man might *address* his wife's matrilineal kin older than himself by the same terms as she did but he was not obliged to do so. He
[551] might also address them by their names and caste titles. They addressed him by his personal name, adding the caste title if he were of
[564] higher caste.

A man addressed his wife's younger matrilineal kinsmen by name. Because of the avoidance relationship he and his wife's younger sisters used no terms or names to address each other.

If she knew them and was of the same caste as they were, a woman addressed her husband's older matrilineal relatives by the same terms as he did. She addressed by name those younger than herself. She called her husband's younger sister who was older than herself *jyēshtatti,* (elder sister). Because of the avoidance relationship no terms or names were used between a woman and her husband's brothers who were older than she.

In hypergamous marriages a woman and her husband's natal kin used no terms to address each other.

An individual used no terms, but only names, to address his father's matrilineal kin.

601 *Comment:* In general, the restricted use of reference terms for
[581] affines and the lack of terms for patrilateral kin other than the father reflect the slenderness of the marriage tie and the lack of obligations to these kin.

Affinal terms were mainly restricted to the spouses of ego's older matrilineal kin, persons with whom he had fairly regular contact. Even these, however, might be *referred* to by descriptive compound

terms. When one of these terms applies to more than one relative the 601
equation issues simply from the equation of the matrilineal kin who
are their spouses.

There was a lack of terms for affines younger than ego because un- [561]
less sex difference caused ego to avoid them completely, the principle of age rank made it possible to address them by name. Descriptive compound terms were adequate to refer to them.

However, the existence of the special reciprocal reference term between brothers-in-law points up the uniqueness of the brother-sister tie and the fact that a woman's brothers and her husband were brought into a specially close relationship by virtue of their claims upon the woman who linked them.

The use of B3 as a collective term reflects the fact that, as sex partners and fathers, these men had a common interest in ego's matrilineal group and it in them.

MODERN CHANGES

Since about 1890, as I have described elsewhere (Gough, 1952), Nayar 595
marriage has become monogamous and men have assumed rights in and
obligations to their children. The matrilineage is gradually disinte- 178
grating and the elementary family is gradually emerging as the key [613]
group in a system of bilateral, interpersonal kinship ties. [594]

As a result of these changes, terms formerly restricted to matri- 601
lateral kin are today sometimes used to address corresponding patri-
lateral kin, although this usage is not yet standardized. The most com- 178
mon equations are MoMo = FaMo, MoMoBr = FaMoBr, MoFa = FaFa, MoBr = FaBr, MoSi = FaSi, MoBrWi = FaBrWi, and MoSiHu = FaSiHu. Cross cousins and paternal parallel cousins still have no reference terms but if older are addressed as siblings. No other regular changes are observable for kin of ego's or ascending generations, and no regular changes have occurred in terms for descending generations.

As the system now stands, therefore, ego's matrilineal kin of the same sex are still merged within each generation, but the transferences to patrilateral kin have created a mixture between "lineal" and "generation" systems in the sense of Murdock and earlier writers, as far as the own and ascending generations are concerned (Murdock, 1949: 149). A "generation" classification is used for both sexes of ego's generation, with all cousins equated with siblings. A "generation" classification is also used for women of the first ascending generation, if we discount the age prefixes used to differentiate older and younger sisters of the parents. If we classify the age prefixes as constituting sep-

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arate terms, we have a "lineal" classification for the women of this generation. Men of the first ascending generation are classified in a "lineal" manner, with FaBr = MoBr, both separated from Fa. Female affines of the first ascending generation are "lineal," with FaBrWi = MoBrWi, both separated from Mo. Male affines of the first ascending generation are "generational," with Fa = MoSiHu = FaSiHu. The terms faithfully reflect an extreme matrilineal system which is in process of breaking down in favor of bilateral kindreds.

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116 **TEXTS**--a full set of pages from each processed source, arranged in page order, as a means of establishing the context for any particular slip. Sets are arranged in the numerical order of the sources. See also:

Literary texts 539

3;Gough E-4, 5 (1947-1949)1961 AW11 Kerala AW11
North Kerala Nayar

MATRILINEAL KINSHIP

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[title page]

7

Kathleen Gough

Nayar: North Kerala

The Nayars of North Kerala live between the Chandragiri and the 175
Kora rivers. This area lay north of the Calicut kingdom and had been 648
conquered by the Kolattiri kings at some period before the fourteenth [131]
century (Logan, 1951, I: 283; Innes, 1908: 57). It then disintegrated
into the small kingdoms of Kolattunad, Kottayam, and Kadattunad.
North Kerala was invaded from the Bednur kingdom of South Canara
in the 1730's. It was later occupied by Muslim armies from Mysore
between 1766 and 1792, after which it passed under British rule
(Logan, 1951, I: 360, 399–473). This account deals with conditions [121]
before 1760, so far as these are known, and with the major changes of
the nineteenth century.

Ecology

The mountains approach nearer to the sea in North Kerala than in Central 133
Kerala. There are fewer stretches of lowland suitable for wet-rice 241
cultivation, and gardens of fruits, nuts, vegetables, and spices on hillsides
are more extensive. Since rice was the main subsistence crop, 262
population density was lower than in Central Kerala. The houses of 161
a village (*dēsam*) were scattered in gardens on hillsides surrounding 361
a wet-rice flat in a valley. Villages were often separated by three to 487
six miles of uncultivated scrub or jungle. Until the Mysoreans built
roads after the 1760's, transport and communication by narrow mountain 648
paths were difficult, especially in the heavy monsoons.

North Kerala had four major ports during the period of European 439
trade—Cannanore, Tellicherry, Mahé, and Badagara (Hamilton, ed. [504]
1727: 369–371). Pepper and other spices were exported from inland
villages probably from Roman times, but villages were virtually self-sufficient [433]
for food until the mid-eighteenth century. After that time [491]
the Mysoreans' roads permitted greater import of goods both from the
coast and from Mysore, and greater spatial mobility. In the nineteenth
century cash-crop farming for export increased, as did imports of

439 food and other goods. The population expanded and much formerly
[161] waste land was brought under cultivation as gardens for the produc-
tion of coconuts, pepper, cashew nuts, and cinnamon. Higher in the
[241] mountains Europeans developed estates of tea, coffee, and spices,
[464] which attracted wage labor from villages to the west. The develop-
ment of the steamship, the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869, and
[496] the entry of railways into Kerala in the 1860's were significant events
in this process.

564 Political and Economic Systems

[566] Traditionally, a hierarchy of the major Hindu castes was present as
in Central Kerala, except that large areas of North Kerala had no
Pulayas or agricultural serfs (*ibid.*, I: 148). Nambudiri Brahmans
were fewer than in Central Kerala, but they controlled a small num-
ber of temple estates and claimed religious superiority over the Nayar
439 rulers. Muslims were the dominant trading population of the ports
563 and inland trading centers.

631 The mountainous terrain, heavy rainfall, poor communications,
sparse population, and comparatively low productivity made politi-
cal centralization more difficult than in Central Kerala. The ancient
Kolattiri kingdom was divided into chiefdoms and villages in a man-
ner similar to the later kingdom of the Zamorin, but judicial con-
trol was perhaps never as well centralized as in the Calicut kingdom.
175 From the fourteenth century, when the Zamorins captured most of
635 the Arab trade, the Kolattiri kingship lost some of its former power.
[634] The kingdom disintegrated into three smaller, virtually independent
kingdoms—Kolattunad, Kottayam, and Kadattunad—plus a number
of small border chiefdoms of uncertain allegiance (*ibid.*, I: 343–344).
174 Each of the three North Kerala kingdoms probably had a population
161 of between 150,000 and 250,000, in contrast to the Calicut kingdom,
635 which seems to have numbered some 600,000 to 720,000 (see note
5, page 473).

175 After 1500 each of the North Kerala rulers sought the help of one
or another of the mutually hostile European and Middle Eastern trad-
648 ing powers, thus maintaining a state of fragmentation until the My-
634 sorean conquest. In the struggles of the seventeenth and eighteenth
635 centuries some new Nayar chiefs also arose with mushroom rapidity
on the basis of European support and gained partially autonomous
sway over small groups of villages. Political and social mobility among
Nayar aristocrats was thus more marked in North Kerala than in the
more stable central kingdoms. Indeed, a North Kerala proverb re-

175

marks that "When a high-caste Nayar becomes ripe, he turns into a 648 634
king." 635

Low productivity and poor communications perhaps made the ex-
action of tribute more difficult than in Central Kerala, and this fact, 621
plus the uncertain nature of trade, made the local rulers perennially 634
short of funds. This is probably the reason why, although they were [651]
trained for warfare in gymnasia in their villages, Nayars were not
regularly conscripted into a national army. Instead, they merely fought [701]
sporadically on behalf of local chiefs. Further, chiefs and village head- [622]
men were insufficiently strong to bring all the land under their con-
trol. Their domains were larger than those of Nayar commoners, but [613]
most commoner Nayar property groups were independent small land-
lords in their own right within their villages. Since they were not [592]
full-time warriors and since in many areas they had no serfs, Nayar [423]
commoners also did part of their own cultivation on their small es- [241]
tates. Part of their land, however, they leased to Tiyyar tenants as in
Central Kerala. The polluting castes of village servants had the same [427]
rights and spatial distribution as in Central Kerala. In general, the [564]
economic processes of reciprocity and redistribution in villages pro- [437]
ceeded in a comparable manner.

As independent warrior-cultivators, the Nayar commoners were not 564
divided into separate castes of retainers owing allegiance as vassals 621
and *kānam* tenants to different kinds of lords. Most villages were nom-
inally under Nayar village headmen. In villages of the Kottayam and 613
Kadattunad kingdoms, both the headman's lineage and those of the 582
Nayar commoners belonged to a large caste called Nambiars, who appear to have intermarried throughout the kingdom. Although of the same general caste as commoners, and not forbidden by religious law from intermarrying equally with commoners, Nambiar village headmen's lineages tended, however, to intermarry only with each other or to take wives only from the commoners, occasionally giving their own women in marriage to chiefs or Brahmans. Chiefs claimed a higher caste rank as Samantan Nambiars, and royalty as Kshattriyas. These aristocratic lineages conducted hypergamous marriages with each other and with Nambudiris as in Central Kerela.

Judicial processes were somewhat less centralized than in the 692
Central kingdoms. At least in theory, grave crimes and civil disputes in urban centers seem to have been tried in royal courts, but most civil disputes inland were apparently tried by local chiefs. Under the chiefs, caste assemblies of neighborhoods took care of crimes against
religious law as in the Central kingdoms. Murder among Nayars 000

Murder among the Nayars
627 sometimes led to blood feuds between lineages (*ibid.*, I: 195–196).
613 Chiefs could usually cut short a feud between commoner lineages, but
628 even these feuds occasionally ran their course for a generation, although
cognatic and affinal ties between lineages helped to bring
them to a close. Greater feuds were sometimes waged between the
lineages of village headmen or chiefs of adjacent districts, in which
the commoner Nayars of each area might participate.

Matrilineal Units

614 THE CLAN

564 Among Nambiar commoners the largest matrilineal unit was the clan
(*vamsham* or *illam*). It had the functions of exogamy and mutual
hospitality. Common descent was merely stipulated and not demonstrated
and the order of segmentation within the clan was unknown.
[635] The clan might be dispersed throughout a kingdom or even, perhaps,
between kingdoms. Its members might point to a particular village as
their original ancestral site, but each clan seems to have been much
older and its history less clearly documented than among Nayar retainers
in Central Kerela. There is no doubt that clans became much
more dispersed in the nineteenth century than they had traditionally
been because of the development of new areas of cultivation and increased
mobility between villages. However, even traditionally the
clan seems to have had more members and a wider spread than in the
Central area. Its characteristics may be attributed to several factors.
First, Nambiars were not divided into separate retainer castes. Thus,
although the majority of commoner marriages were within the village,
[582] Nambiars did have greater freedom to marry and move more freely
between villages throughout the realm. Lacking a strong superordinate
political structure and internal caste differentiation to give form
to their relationships, they had larger kinship units. Newcomers to a village
probably did not need to become affiliated to its assembly by order
[608] of a superior political authority. Instead, they could probably affiliate
themselves with their clan fellows and so at once be provided also with
614 classificatory affines in other clans. Second, Nambiars practised
avunculocal residence; husband and wife lived in the husband's
564 matrilineal ancestral house (Buchanan, 1807: 513–514). Sons normally
591 moved back to their own matrilineal homes at puberty, but daughters
[425] moved to their husbands' homes. However, Nambiar fathers occasionally
gave privately acquired land to their wives and children
when they were able. The children might then settle permanently in

the father's village, if this was different from the mother's. In this 614
way, matrilineal kin might become widely scattered between many 564
villages, while remembering the village from which their matrilineal 591
forebears sprang.

THE SUB-CLAN

This group corresponded to the clan in Central Kerala. It was a 614
segment of the clan whose members seem to have been located within [634]
one chiefdom. The structure and functions of this group were identical [765]
with those of the clan in Central Kerala, the members observing death [844]
and birth pollutions as well as exogamy. [783]

THE LINEAGE

As in Central Kerala, the lineage was that portion of a clan located 613
in one neighborhood (tara). Traditionally there seem to have been about six to ten lineages in one neighborhood, as in Central Kerala. A lineage was internally segmented and segmentation was relevant
to the reversion of property. Exogamy, the observance of pollution, [783]
and the extension of kinship terms inhered in the lineage. Perhaps because village headship was weaker than in Calicut and each commoner lineage stronger as an organized group of kinsfolk, rites connected with the lineage were more prominent in the North than in
the Center (Gough, 1958). There were few or no neighborhood [346]
temples of Bhagavadi. Instead, each lineage held a grand annual [796]
festival to its own patron Bhagavadi and to minor male deities, in
which the lower castes took part. We have mentioned blood feuds [776]
between lineages, which indicate that a lineage was, in popular [627]
thought, if not in law, considered responsible for its members' physical protection.

Little is known today of the enangar relationship in North Kerala. 613
It did exist, and enangar are said to have attended life-crisis rites and 588
to have had some function in neighborhood caste trials of offenders against religious law. However, enangar did not tie the tālis of immature girls and did not participate in any form of group marriage. Among Nambiars and in most of the aristocratic Nayar lineages a girl's tāli was tied before puberty by some local Nambudiri Brahman. He was often an old man, and he appears to have had no right of
cohabitation. The woman and her children did not observe pollution [765]
at his death. As far as I can judge the tāli rite in this area was merely [783]
an initiation rite which, at least in the nineteenth century, removed
the ritual danger of cohabiting with a virgin (Gough, 1955). It also [835]
instituted the etiquette associated with incest prohibitions between the girl and her matrilineal kinsmen.

613
THE PROPERTY GROUP

564 The property group, a segment of the lineage, was among Nambiar
commoners of roughly the same size and internal composition as
422 among the Nayar retainers of Central Kerala. Its members jointly
423 owned both movable and immovable property in the same manner.
Its kāranavan managed the estate, had legal guardianship over members,
and was legally responsible for them to the local caste assembly
and to the chief. All Nayar property groups appear to have owned some
[427] garden and rice lands as *jenmis.* In addition some leased land on
kānam tenure from chiefs, royalty, or Brahmans if any were present
in their village. A property group whose membership was expanding
might bring under cultivation waste land belonging to the chief on a
tenure known as *kurikānam.* The tenant had the right of occupancy
for twelve years without paying rent; he then paid an annual share of
produce to the landlord. The improvements he made (trees, houses,
etc.) were his own and he could not be evicted without compensation
for them.

613 Residence was ideally *avunculocal.* Plural marriages for women were
591 forbidden, and a man normally brought his wife to live with him on
his matrilineal estate for the duration of the marriage. This mode of
residence was apparently related to population density and to the
sexual division of labor. Some duolocal marriages did exist between
partners living in nearby houses in the same village. However, houses
and villages were so scattered that most men would have had difficulty
[901] in maintaining a visiting relationship with a wife. Matrilocal
residence was also disadvantageous because men did much of the
work of cultivation on their own estates, were required to defend their
estates against invaders, and were mobilized by the chiefs in war
on the basis of property-group membership. A few junior men lived
matrilocally for short periods, but the kāranavan and most of the
adult men lived on their own estates.

613 In the relatively small property groups of commoners, the dwelling
592 group was thus often an avunculocal extended family. It would
comprise a group of brothers, their wives and immature children,
[596] their adult sisters' sons, and the wives and small children of these
men. Divorced or widowed women born into the property group also
had the right of permanent residence there, and married women born
into it might return to live there for several weeks or months when
they wished.

In the larger property groups of some commoners, village headmen, and chiefs, the main ancestral house might be reserved for

divorced or widowed women of the group and their children, together 613
with temporarily divorced men or elderly widowers. The 592
kāranavan, his wife, and his immature children would occupy a wing
of the ancestral house or a separate building in the same courtyard.
Married men of the group would live with their wives and children
in separate houses, all on the matrilineal estate. The kāranavan would 613
then allocate separate gardens and rice fields for usufruct to each 423
married man. A junior would often hold such land on kānam tenure
from the taravād as a whole. The kāranavan would retain a larger 592
portion of the estate for his own maintenance and that of unmarried
persons living in the ancestral house. In any case he retained ultimate
management of the whole property and might retract portions of it at
will. If, however, a junior man leased new land from the taravād
on kurikānam tenure, the improvements he made on it might, by
custom although not by law, become the separate property of his
mother's matrilineal descendants. If, later, the whole property was
divided between major segments of the property group, each branch
might take as its share the fields and gardens on which improvements
had been made by male members of that branch. In the larger
aristocratic taravāds one or two sthānam estates might be set aside
for the men immediately junior to the kāranavan. Their holders
managed such estates with greater independence than the plots allocated
to more junior men. All cultivation was carried on with the [427]
aid of Tiyyar laborers attached by hereditary right to the taravād. In
some cases also plots were given on sub-tenure to Tiyyar cultivating
tenants in the same manner as in Central Kerala.

A man might also—at least in the nineteenth century—with the 613
consent of his own and his wife's kāranavan, lease land on kānam or 427
kurikānam tenure from his wife's taravād. A few junior men actually
went to live matrilocally in the wife's ancestral house or in a separate 423
house which they built on the wife's ancestral estate. Houses and improvements 591
to land provided by a husband in this way customarily
became the separate property of the wife and her matrilineal descendants.
Land on which such improvements had been made also [428]
normally passed to the wife's descendants as their share when the
whole property of the wife's taravād was finally divided. Matrilocal
residence by a junior man was rare and could always be objected to
by the man's kāranavan if his services were needed at home. However,
a man who was himself a kāranavan had considerable freedom
to build a house and develop new gardens on his wife's taravād
estate, which would later enrich his wife's matrilineal descendants. If

423

613 the wife's taravād was near his own he might divide his time between
427 his own ancestral house and the private house he had built for his
591 wife and her descendants on her ancestral estate.

Although this was contrary to customary law, some men also man-
613 aged to give jenmam land outright to a wife and her matrilineal de-
431 scendants, thus founding a new branch taravād through the wife.
423 This practice greatly increased in the nineteenth century, when new
gardens were continually being developed on former waste land and
when land became freely marketable. In 1896, indeed, a law was
[671] finally passed enabling a man's wife and children to inherit half of
[428] his self-acquired intestate property (Malabar Marriage Act, 1896).
Occasional gifts of land to the wife and her descendants were, however, known long before the British period, although they were
against the law. At the political level, kings and chiefs occasionally
gave large domains, together with the office of chief or village head-
[634] man, to their wives' matrilineal descendants. The chiefships of both
[635] Nileswaram and Kadattunad are said to have been formed in this
way by gifts from Kolattiri kings before the fourteenth century; both
later became virtually independent kingdoms (Logan, 1951, I: 343;
Ayyar, 1938: 4). Many smaller territories and political offices were
similarly bequeathed during the period of European trade. On a
smaller scale, the kāranavan of a Nambiar taravād sometimes man-
aged to take out a portion of the fallow jenmam land of his own
taravād, cultivate it, and give it to his wife and her descendants.
[578] Naturally, such gifts, which were in no sense a part of acknowledged
lawful custom, led to disputes with the donor's matrilineal kin and
[627] sometimes, in the next generation, to feuds between lineages.

Gifts of land or improvements by a man to his wife's descendants
613 led to the existence of branch property groups, called *tāvari-taravāds,*
431 within the main property group. After the donor's death the wife's
423 kāranavan might manage such a small estate on behalf of her branch,
retaining the income separately for her and her children. More com-
592 monly, the donor's eldest son became the kāranavan of the tāvari
property, while the branch also continued to receive its ancestral dues out of the property of the taravād as a whole. When a stirpital division of the whole taravād occurred, this branch might claim both its separate estate and its share of the ancestral property. If the donor had been a chief and the gift was large, the branch to which it was given might, however, choose to leave its taravād without taking a share of the ancestral estate and to found a new taravād home on its new land. Tāvari-taravāds were, however, rare among commoners

until the second half of the nineteenth century. Their existence before 613
1750 seems to have been chiefly associated with conquest of land by 431
chiefs. After the British conquest they became associated rather with 423
the gradual expansion of the population to newly cultivated lands, 592
and with the ability of men to acquire land as personal and freely [178]
marketable property. [648]

Recent Developments in North and Central Kerala Contrasted

The modern North Kerala practice, whereby a man acquires newly 423
cultivated garden land and gives it to his wife and children, makes 431
Nayar residence heterogeneous at the present time. My data come [591]
from a village of Kottayam division where, in 1948, the great majority
of Nambiar men were small owner- or tenant-cultivators. It was found [114]
that out of 42 Nambiar houses, 23 (55 per cent) had been built by individual men and given to their wives and children. Only 45 per cent had been built in the traditional manner by a matrilineally related group of men for their taravād.

Regarding the constitution of households, it was found that 29 per 592
cent were "traditional," avunculocal extended family households 178
comprising matrilineally related men, their wives, and small children, with or without divorced or widowed mothers or sisters of these men; 48 per cent contained an elementary family with or without another relative of either husband or wife—a widowed mother, unmarried sibling, etc.; 14 per cent contained a widow or divorcee with her unmarried children; 7 per cent contained a segment of a lineage —a group of matrilineally related men *and* women of the Central Kerala type, with the men visiting their wives in other households; 2 per cent (1 house) contained a man whose wife had just died, and the unmarried children.

Taking the residence of the 53 married couples by household, it 591
was found that 26 per cent lived in the traditional manner in the 178
matrilineal home of the husband. Some of these husbands were 592
kāranavans; others lived avunculocally with a mother's brother. Fifteen per cent lived duolocally as in Central Kerala, with the husband visiting the wife. At least half, however, were couples in which the wife had recently had a child and was only temporarily living in her natal home; she would later return to her husband's matrilineal home, thus bringing the total percentage of couples in the husband's matrilineal home up to about 33 per cent. Six per cent lived patrilocally in the husband's father's private house, while 4 per cent lived

591 matrilocally in a home with the wife's mother and sometimes with
178 others of her older matrilineal kin. Twenty-six couples (49 per cent)
lived neolocally in a house provided by the husband and containing
592 no natal kin of either husband or wife. Of these 26 neolocally resident
couples, 6 (11 per cent) lived in a house which the husband had in-
herited from his dead father; 3 (6 per cent of the total) lived in a
house which the husband had obtained from his taravād; 14 (26 per
cent) lived in a house newly built by the husband for his wife.

594 These figures may be contrasted with the modern picture in a
613 Central Kerala village, where the marketability of land and labor
178 have also brought about a partial disintegration of matrilineal descent
groups and an emergence of the elementary family as a residential
and economic unit. Both in Central and in North Kerala, moreover,
595 marriage has been compulsorily monogamous since the 1930's, men
656 have been legally obliged to maintain their wives and children, and
178 the whole of man's private intestate property has passed to his mother,
428 wife, and children at his death (Madras *Marumakkattāyam* Act, 1933;
Cochin Nayar Act, 1938; Nair, 1941: 306). In addition, it has now be-
421 come legally possible for the members of a taravād to divide their
matrilineal ancestral property on a per capita basis. Once the an-
613 cestral property has been divided into individual shares in this way
178 it becomes private property in law and is heritable in the same manner
as are self-acquisitions. Both in Central and North Kerala, therefore,
economic change and resultant modern laws have combined to break
down traditional matrilineal descent groups.

425 In Central Kerala, however, population is denser and there has
178 been less waste land available for individual cultivation. Over the
past hundred years, therefore, when individual men have acquired
464 private plots, it has more often been through purchase of already
[160] cultivated land than through cultivation of virgin land. Further,
Nayar men in Central Kerala, having been a professional militia,
[701] tended after the disbanding of their armies either to remain non-
cultivating owners and tenants or where possible to move into new
forms of salaried employment. Central Kerala today is more urbanized
than is North Kerala, so that a much greater proportion of Nayars
have salaried work in factories, as clerks, as government servants, as
schoolteachers, or in the armed services. Many are unemployed and
merely live from their ancestral lands. Particularly among retainer
Nayars, who are relatively poor, men have amassed less self-acquired
423 land than was possible for Nayar cultivators in North Kerala. More-
178 over, because Nayar men are often not themselves the cultivators of

their land, there has been a tendency—under the new law of division 423
of taravād property—for women and immature children to retain the 178
ancestral houses and much of the land and for men to take their individual shares of the property in cash. Thus, having left their [613]
taravāds with their shares, some men now find themselves living in a
house owned by the wife and her young children. Other men pool [425]
their share of property with that of the wife and jointly buy a new
garden and house. When the location of their work permits it, most [591]
men remain in their ancestral homes until middle age and visit their wives in the traditional manner.

Modern residential patterns in Central Kerala, although moving in 178
the direction of autonomy for the elementary family, thus show a [594]
different bias from that seen in North Kerala. Our contrast is made [464]
with data from a Cochin village three miles from a large town, where 75 per cent of Nayars of retainer castes worked for wages in the
town. Here, out of 65 high-caste Nayar houses, 40 (61 per cent) had [342]
been built by kāranavans for their taravāds in the traditional manner; only 22 per cent had been built by a man for his wife and children, and 11 per cent had been built or bought jointly by husband and wife; 3 per cent had been built by a man for his private use, and 3 per cent by a woman for herself and her children.

Taking the constitution of households, we find that 46 per cent 592
contained matrilineage segments more or less of the traditional type, 613
except that one or more husbands of the women might live regularly 178
in the house. Seventeen per cent contained a "broken" matrilineage segment, the adult men of which had left their natal kinswomen, taken a share of the property in cash, and gone to live with their wives. In these houses the husbands of the remaining women might or might not be living with their wives. Twenty-nine per cent of the households were simple elementary families; 3 per cent contained only one man; 3 per cent contained an extended family composed of some modern mixture of matrilineal and patrilateral kin; and one house contained a widow with her small children.

Taking the residence of married couples by household, we find that 591
out of 100 couples, 58 lived duolocally, the husband dividing his time 592
between his natal home and that of his wife in the traditional manner. 178
In some cases the wife might occasionally move for a few weeks to live in the husband's natal home if circumstances made this particularly desirable. Such an arrangement was however very modern in Central Kerala; it was much disliked by women and was seldom resorted to. Eighteen of the couples lived matrilocally; the couple

591 shared a home with the wife's mother and sometimes with others of
592 her matrilineal elders. Twenty-four lived neolocally in a house containing no natal kinsfolk of either partner; of these 24 couples, 7
178 lived in a private house acquired by the husband; 11 lived in a house
jointly acquired by husband and wife; and 6 lived in a house acquired
by the wife.

591 As these figures suggest, duolocality is still the accepted norm of
178 residence for younger married couples in Central Kerala, and avunculocality slightly less so for those in North Kerala. In both areas
[434] participation in a market economy has caused a shift toward neolocality, especially for middle-aged couples. In the North Kerala
village, however, the modern prevalence of cash-crop farming has
carried this tendency further than has small-scale urban wage work
[562] in the village in Cochin. At the same time, because of the coöperation
of North Kerala men in cultivation, the male sex normally determines
the pattern of residence. Couples live avunculocally, neolocally, or
591 even patrilocally because men must live on their land. In the Cochin
562 village, by contrast, the male shift from military to small-scale salaried
employment has only partially undermined the position of women as
464 the sex which remains on the ancestral land and for which the land
178 is cultivated by lower-caste servants. It is still women whose claims,
in the majority of cases, determine the choice of residence in Central
Kerala. Women, whenever possible, remain on their own land and
men adapt themselves to this condition by living duolocally, matrilocally, or in some cases neolocally in a house partly provided by the
wife.

Kinship Relationships

613

MATRILINEAL KIN

576 The etiquette of behavior between matrilineal kin was traditionally the same in North as in Central Kerala, but the emphases in terms of rights and obligations were somewhat different.

The kāranavan's ultimate legal authority was much the same as in
the Central kingdoms. However, he lacked domestic authority over
women and their small children, who resided elsewhere. Among
[591] adults, avunculocal residence caused great emphasis to be placed on
the unity of the matrilineally related men, who should coöperate
in work and property management for the good of the taravād as a
whole. Covertly, their relationships tended to be rivalrous and hostile.
Open disputes between them were often avoided through the separate
allocation of plots to individual men. The distance thus created be-

613

tween them also permitted the observance of the type of very formal 576
etiquette that existed in the Central kingdoms.

A peculiarity of strict avunculocal residence is that it separates 591
a woman from both her sons and her daughters after they are married. 593
The sons return to their ancestral estates and the daughters leave
with their husbands. The relationships of mother and children were
therefore less continuous than in Central Kerala. However, various 591
particular arrangements did often permit women to live with some 582
of their children for a great part of their lives. Cross-cousin marriage
was one of these. Matrilateral cross-cousin marriage was the most
popular, because by this means the daughter of a kāranavan and his
wife could be brought into their dwelling group as the wife of the
kāranavan's nephew. Patrilateral cross-cousin marriage was also popular but less common.[1] It was less advantageous unless a shift from
the normal residential arrangements could be made. This sometimes
occurred when a kāranavan succeeded in arranging a marriage between his son and his sister's daughter. The son might then remain on
his father's ancestral estate for part of his life in patrilocal residence.
Any property which he developed there would pass to his wife's [428]
descendants as matrilineal heirs of the estate. In this way a woman [593]
might keep one of her sons living with her for a large part of her life.

Women were also commonly reunited with their sons at divorce or 591
widowhood, for they would then return to their taravāds to live. 593
Whatever the circumstances of residence, moreover, a man should
place his duties to mother and sisters above those to wife and children.
The ideals of devotion and reverence to matrilineal kinswomen were
the same as in Central Kerala. Brother and sister were drawn apart
by the normal rules of residence but, like mother and son, came together if the sister were divorced or widowed and returned to her
taravād. A woman also returned to her taravād for several months at [844]
the time of childbirth, for every child had to be born in its own
taravād.

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[1] In the Kottayam village already cited, 12 per cent of Nambiar commoner
women who had been married had at some time married their father's own or
classificatory sister's son; 8 per cent had married their own or classificatory maternal
uncle's son. Cross-cousin marriage is, as everywhere in Kerala, more common
among the aristocratic lineages of village headmen and chiefs. Of the women of
six village headmen's lineages over a period of five generations, 17 per cent had
married their father's own or classificatory sister's son, and 13 per cent their own
or classificatory maternal uncle's son. Patrilateral cross-cousin marriage is thus more [593]
usual in North than in Central Kerala. One reason for this is that fathers in North [584]
Kerala more commonly educate and endow their sons. By this means a father ac- [184]
quires the right to a voice in arranging his son's marriage, often to the father's
niece.

000
574 taravād. A woman might also visit for several weeks each year.
Brother and younger sister, like a man and his sister's daughter, ob-
[593] served rules of partial avoidance—associated with incest prohibitions
[604] —during their periods of co-residence.

Sisters were always separated upon marriage, for the Nayars of
591 this area, unlike those to the south, forbade the marriage of two
582 brothers to two sisters. They say that such marriages would endanger
the unity of the brothers' taravād by introducing into it too strong a
613 contingent from another lineage (Gough, 1952). Sisters were together,
591 however, during childhood in their father's house, and were often
reunited in old age when they went back to the taravād. Although
[593] they might seldom have stayed there during childhood and early
[763] youth, women seem usually to have died in their matrilineal ancestral homes. A woman was often widowed in old age. Alternatively
[586] she might elect to leave her husband and return to her taravād and
sons when her period of childbearing was ended. In any case a
[764] woman's body had to be cremated and her funeral rites performed
in the garden of her taravād house.

Women in avunculocal residence were partly maintained by their
[431] husbands' taravāds in return for domestic services. Nevertheless, important distributive ties persisted between them and their matrilineal kinsmen. Usually their kāranavan sent quantities of grain and clothing to them and their children twice annually after the harvests as part of their maintenance.

585
MARRIAGE

[582] Following the tāli rite, a girl entered into a marriage relationship
(sambandham) with one man at about the age of eleven. The father's
sister's son, if of suitable age, was considered the rightful claimant.
[686] If the girl did not marry him her kāranavan must pay a token fine to him at the marriage ceremony. The giving of the cloth by the husband which marked the start of a sambandham was carried out with ceremony in the girl's ancestral house and was the occasion for a large feast to relatives of both parties. After the marriage had been consummated in the girl's house the couple were ceremonially conducted to the bridegroom's taravād and the girl was formally received into it by her husband's mother and his kāranavan's wife.

[684] While a marriage endured the husband had exclusive rights in his
[848] wife's sexuality. If he detected her in adultery he might by custom
kill her lover, cut off the hair of his wife, and send her home after
divorce. A woman was not, however, excommunicated from caste

585

and her children were not illegitimate unless she had relations with 684
a man of low caste. 848

A woman normally lived with her husband in his ancestral home 593
or in a separate house on his ancestral land. He then owed her physical
protection and at least a part of her food and clothing, in return for [591]
limited domestic services. Occasionally a man might choose to visit
his wife in her ancestral home if she lived nearby. In this case he
might work on her ancestral land or bring periodic provisions of
grain and clothing to her and her children. He would eat sometimes [264]
in his ancestral house and sometimes in the house of his wife. In all [844]
marriages a husband was obliged to pay the full expenses of delivery [613]
when his wife bore a child in her ancestral home and, additionally,
to supply grain and other food to her throughout the six months which [431]
she spent in her taravād at this time.

A woman owed respect and obedience to her husband. He had the
right to scold or even to beat her if she disregarded his wishes.
Polygyny was permitted and was fairly common among village head- [595]
men, chiefs, and royalty. The polygynous husband usually provided
separate houses for his wives on his ancestral estate.

Theoretically, either party might divorce the other at will, but in 586
fact it was usually the husband who initiated a divorce. We do not know how common divorce was in the traditional period. At present it is rare in wealthy landowning lineages, although it probably takes place rather more frequently than among aristocratic Mappillas of North Kerala. It is more usual among the poorer Nambiar commoners, although probably less frequent than among the poorer Tiyyars of this area.

Widows might remarry freely by traditional law. Today it is some- 587
what rare for a widow to remarry if she has children under the age
of three or four; we do not know whether this was the case tradi-
tionally. A widow who does remarry almost invariably leaves her [858]
children by the first marriage behind in her taravād, in the care of her mother or some other older natal kinswomen. Such children may visit their mother in their stepfather's house but they have no customary rights of maintenance there, and it is considered that their own taravād is the correct place for them to live.

Thus in North Kerala, by contrast with Central Kerala, differences 593
of paternity may create structural divisions among the children born 184
of one mother. All are of the same taravād and share the same funda- 858
mental birth-status rights, but if their fathers were different they [613]

593 will have had different life experiences. One set of siblings may re-
184 ceive property from their father in which their maternal half-siblings
858 have no legal rights. Each set of full siblings will have important
relationships with its own paternal kin. In many respects, therefore,
[613] children of the same mother by different fathers have a relationship
more comparable to that of the children of two sisters than to that
which obtains between full siblings. However, the ties between
maternal half-siblings are much stronger than those between paternal
half-siblings, who have only a slight relationship. At best, it may be
comparable to that between paternal parallel cousins; at worst it may
be one of open hostility.

768 A woman's claims on her husband's taravād ceased absolutely with
his death. As in Central Kerala, a widow was ceremonially conducted
613 out of her husband's house immediately after the death and could
[764] not enter it thereafter. Husband and wife did not observe death pollu-
[783] tion and did not take part in each other's funeral rites.

Hypergamous marriages in aristocratic lineages bore some re-
591 semblance to those in Central Kerala, although they were never
613 polyandrous. Brahman husbands of royal or chiefly women lived
184 matrilocally at the expense of the palace as in Central Kerala. Royal
and chiefly men, however, brought their lower-ranking wives to live
on their estates in avunculocal residence. The wife and her children
occupied a separate house or else a wing of the palace with separate
[783] cooking arrangements. Husband and wife observed rules of ritual
pollution as in hypergamous marriages in the Central kingdoms.

855 THE FATHER AND HIS KIN

The kāranavan held ultimate legal control over all his juniors, but
613 their fathers had limited customary rights in and obligations to them.
593 A man was expected to care for his children in his home until they
reached puberty or married. Although their own taravād had a legal
obligation to maintain them in food and clothing, the father's taravād
[867] customarily supplied their day-to-day needs as a matter of pride. The
father was expected to train his small children in manners and morals,
[868] to see that they were taught to write, and to give his sons instruction
in cultivation. In return he could ask his children to do small tasks,
593 could exercise domestic discipline while they stayed with him, and
613 could expect kindness and occasional help from them when he was
[584] old. His consent had to be sought for his children's marriages and he
often arranged the marriage of his daughter, although he could not
[431] override her kāranavan's wishes. Over and above their customary

obligations, some fathers, especially kāranavans, kept their children 593
residing with them for most of their lives and gave them property. A 613
child owed his father obedience and respect. If a man divorced his [431]
wife her children also left him and might see little of him thereafter. [586]
However, they had to observe ritual pollution at his death and his [765]
eldest son took part in his funeral rites along with the chief matrilineal
heir. The eldest son also made annual offerings to his dead father's [769]
spirit. In general the relationship with the father was thought of as
intimate and loving. Children must respect him and a daughter must
not touch him after her puberty. But having no legal authority, the
father was not feared. His role was sharply contrasted with that of
the mother's brother. Uncles were said to teach by scolding and [604]
punishment; fathers, by persuasion and laughter.

The father's kin had privileges and obligations at life-crisis rites— 613
most of which took place in the individual's taravād house—and were 796
feasted and made gifts at the ceremonies of first pregnancy, naming,
first rice feeding, tāli tying, marriage, first menstruation, and death. 553
At the naming ceremony, when a baby was one month old, the father's
mother chose the name, the father's father conferred it, and the father
presented the child with a gold waistband. The kāranavan fulfilled
these roles in Central Kerala.

A person was forbidden to marry his father's sibling or paternal 582
parallel cousin of the father's property group. Affectionate respect was 602
the proper attitude toward all the father's older kin. The paternal 603
grandmother played with a child but did not idolize him as she did
her daughter's child, for he was not of her taravād. Unless he was also
a child's kāranavan, the paternal grandfather was a distant kinsman
who had little to do with his grandchild. The mother's father, on the
other hand, usually doted on his grandchild and was a cherished
companion.

Male cross cousins had a joking relationship and were often close 605
companions. Their relationship might be tinged with hostility con-
cerning the property of their respective father and mother's brother. [578]
Sometimes, at least in the nineteenth century, they quarreled openly
over the inheritance and became enemies thereafter. Male and female
cross cousins had a joking relationship with implicit sexual privileges
if the girl was younger than the man. A boy who returned to his [582]
taravād at puberty often married his matrilateral cross cousin there-
after. Even if she married someone else he might sleep with her [836]
illicitly before or after the marriage. Elders were either ignorant or [837]

605 oblivious of these affairs. If the husband found out he might keep
836 quiet or might divorce his wife, but he would not be likely to take
837 vengeance.

AFFINES

602 The etiquette of behavior between affines was practically identical
576 in North and Central Kerala, but in the North they had recognized
184 obligations.

During her marriage a woman became partly integrated into her
602 husband's property group. Her husband could request her to cook and
592 do limited domestic work for any of his matrilineal kin. She would
613 do so regularly if she lived in an avunculocal extended family. In
such households there was a certain authority structure between the
[593] wives of matrilineally related men, based on the relative age of the
husbands. The oldest woman directed the group and the younger ones should obey her. Matters went most smoothly when a woman was the mother of her husband's niece-in-law. Older women in avunculocal households did not, however, have the unequivocal authority over junior wives which is found in the patrilocal extended families of the higher patrilineal castes of India. They would never beat a girl and usually courted her affection. If the young wife was dissatisfied she might urge her husband to move to a separate house, go home for long periods, or even seek a divorce.

In strict avunculocal residence the kāranavan's wife had domestic authority, keeping the keys of storerooms and directing the younger wives. However, if any woman born into the taravād returned to live in it she could demand the internal management of the home as
[598] a right. The relations between a woman and her husband's sisters and
nieces were thus often strained. Soon after such a natal kinswoman
[607] returned to her home in this way, the kāranavan would try to move his
wife into a separate building to avoid feminine disputes. However, a
[604] younger wife often lived for several years in the same house with her
husband's widowed mother and was expected to obey her with good grace.

602 A woman and her husband's older matrilineal kinsmen avoided one
another—except on ceremonial occasions—because of incest prohibi-
613 tions. She was accorded meticulous respect by her husband's younger
matrilineal kin, who usually feared and resented her influence over her husband. Gruesome proverbs told of the tortures which men and women would like to inflict on the wives of their elder brothers and
[604] uncles, and it was said that "If the uncle's wife and nephews sit down
peaceably together, *nux vomica* and bitter gourds will turn to honey."

The wives of her elder matrilineal kinsmen figured prominently in 602
the life-crisis rites of a girl, performing the ritual acts done by 613
enangar women in Central Kerala. 796

Because of residence patterns men had less contact than did women 613
with the property groups of their spouses. They must be invited to 602
all ceremonies and had ritual duties in those connected with their own children. As sambandhakkar of a property group, the husbands of its female members were usually consulted formally by its kāranavan before he undertook important matters such as building houses or dividing property. He was not, however, obliged to follow their advice.

Kinship Terms

A. MATRILINEAL KIN 601

The pattern of terms was the same as in Central Kerala. Lexically, 184
the only difference was that MoMo and her sisters (A1) were called *acchamma* (literally, "father's mother"), a term extended to them from FaMo. This usage probably resulted from the fact that a child normally recognized FaMo earlier than MoMo and had more contact with her.

B. AFFINES AND NON-MATRILINEAL COGNATES

In North Kerala, as might be expected, there were customary kinship terms for the patrilateral kin. The terms for affines and non-matrilineal cognates were as follows.

(1) *Bhārya*. M. speaking. Wi. Reference only.

(2) *Bartāvu*. F. speaking. Hu. Reference only.

(3) *Sambandhakkar*. M. and F. speaking. Collective. Husbands of women of ego's lineage, primarily of ego's property group. Reference only.

(4) *Acchappan* ("Father's father"). M. and F. speaking. FaFa and FaFaBr. FaFaSiHu, FaMoBr, FaMoSiHu. MoFa and MoFaBr. MoFaSiHu, MoMoSiHu.

(5) *Acchamma* ("Father's mother"). FaMo and FaMoSi. FaFaBrWi, FaFaSi and FaMoBrWi. MoFaSi, MoMo, MoMoSi, MoFaBrWi.

(6) *Amma* ("Mother"). M. and F. speaking. Extended from Mo and MoSi to FaSi and FaBrWi. FaSi is called *valiya* ("big") mother or *elaya* ("younger") mother according to her age in relation to the father. FaBrWi is so designated according to FaBr's age in relation to Fa.

(7) *Acchan*. M. and F. speaking. Fa, mother's current husband,

601 184 FaBr, FaSiHu, MoSiHu. The last three are designated "older" or "younger" in the same manner as above.

(8) *Ammāyi.* M. and F. speaking. Wi of any male of first or second ascending generations within ego's lineage, especially within his property group.

(9) *Aliyan.* M. speaking. Reciprocal between a man and Wi's lineage kinsmen of her generation, primarily within her property group. Reference only.

(10) *Jyēshtatti amma.* M. and F. speaking. Wi of older male of ego's generation within his lineage, primarily within his property group.

(11) *Machunian.* M. and F. speaking. Male cross cousin, i.e., male of ego's father's lineage in ego's generation, or So of ego's own, or classificatory MoBr within his lineage. Extended to male cross cousins of either parent.

(12) *Machunichi.* M. and F. speaking. The female equivalent of B11.

(13) *Makan.* M. speaking. WiSo. Reference only.

(14) *Makal.* M. speaking. WiDa. Reference only.

(15) *Pērakutti.* M. and F. speaking. Reciprocal of B4 and B5. Used primarily of own grandchild through either So or Da. Reference only.

[602] A man or woman used the same terms to address the spouse's natal kin as the own natal kin except in case of an avoidance relationship.

[605] An individual *addressed* all cross-cousins in the same manner as siblings, reserving terms B11 and B12 for reference. He addressed and referred to paternal parallel cousins as siblings.

[564] Kinship terms were used in relationships with affines or cognates of higher or lower matrilineal caste but not in relationships with Nambudiri Brahman relatives.

601 602 *Comment:* Males and females of the second ascending generation were equated with grandparents, except for the maternal great-uncle and his wife. This fits the fact that relationships with the maternal great-uncle and his wife were distant and authoritative while those with other kin of this generation were non-authoritative and informal. Similarly, in the first ascending generation the mother's brother and his wife are singled out as distant and authoritative figures. All others of this generation are classed with the parents as non-authoritative figures.

The existence of Iroquois cousin terms for reference fits the special joking relationship and preferential marriage between cross cousins as contrasted with the prohibition of marriage between parallel cousins of both sides.

[pp. 405-745 not processed]

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[Title Page]

[P. 446]

CULTS OF THE DEAD AMONG THE NĀYARS

By E. Kathleen Gough

121 IN this paper I shall attempt both a sociological and a psychological analysis of
Nāyar cults of the dead. That is to say, I shall try to relate the role-structure
and social functions of the cults to those of legal and economic institutions, and
to relate the emotional content of the cults to that of certain relationships among the
living.

613 The Nāyars[1] are a high, matrilineal caste of landholders and salaried workers.
564 Some four to seven matrilineal lineages of commoner Nāyars traditionally occupied
101 the high caste area of a village. They served a Nāyar or Nambūdiri Brahman village
headman, and had authority over tenants, artisans, and serfs of lower caste. The
lineage was exogamous, had a depth of about ten to fifteen generations and was concerned in village government. But the more significant economic unit was a lineage
segment (*taravād*), whose members jointly owned property including an ancestral
house. The eldest man of this group was its legal guardian (*kāranavan*).

635 Before British rule began in 1792, the Malabar Coast comprised a number of
175 kingdoms. I am concerned with Nāyars of villages in the former Cochin kingdom,
in the center of the coast, and with those of villages in the former Kottayam kingdom
121 in the north.

In Cochin, the country was relatively flat, fertile, and densely populated. The
105 Nāyars were the professional military caste. For a part of each year they tended to be
184 absent from the village in military training or war. Women remained on their ancestral
[133] estates under the legal guardianship of the *kāranavan* and were maintained by the
[595] work of tenants and serfs. Probably largely as a result of the relatively mobile military
occupation of the men, plural marital unions were customary. A woman might have
six or eight husbands of her own or a higher subcaste, and a man, any number of
[591] Nāyar wives of his own or a lower subcaste. Residence was duolocal: spouses lived
separately in their natal homes and a husband visited his wife in her home at night.
[851] Exact physiological paternity was, clearly, often unknown, and in any case a man had
[594] no rights in nor obligations to his children. Among Nāyars of this area, therefore,
contrary to Murdock's generalization,[2] the elementary family was not institutionalized
[114] as a legal, economic or residential unit.

In Kottayam, the terrain was mountainous and jungly, the area more sparsely
[133] populated, and the kingdom less centralized. The Nāyars were cultivating landowners
[591] and only occasional warriors. The hilly and jungly terrain and the sparsity of population
made duolocal residence impracticable. In most cases a man took his wife to live in
his ancestral household in avunculocal residence, and children were brought up until
[595] adolescence in the houses of their fathers. There was some polygyny, but polyandry
was forbidden. Fathers had morally though not legally recognized rights in and

obligations to their children and a strong affective bond with them. The *Karanavān* 105
of their lineage segment was however the authority in important matters. 184

Both in Kottayam and in Cochin, Nāyar women were occasionally married to 105
men of the highest, patrilineal caste of Nambūdiri Brahmans. Children of such unions 564
were Nāyars, and rules of ritual pollution maintained distance between them and their
higher caste fathers. The Nambūdiri father might not eat with his wife and children, 582
and might not touch them during the daytime while in a state of ritual purity. Only [184]
the eldest son of a Nambūdiri house might marry a Nambūdiri wife and beget children
for his own family.

British rule brought about the collapse of the Nāyar armies early in the nineteenth 105
century. Probably as a result of this change, plural marriages gradually died out in 177
Cochin. The lineage system persisted with little change until the turn of the century, 178
but in both areas the employment of men in professional and wage work led to the [613]
development of privately owned property in addition to property owned jointly by
the matrilineal group. The Malabar Marriage Act of 1896 permitted men to register [656]
their marriages and gave the children of such marriages rights in half the personal [421]
property of the father after his death. During this century, the greatly increased
employment of men in salaried work, and the development of cash-crop farming, [464]
have brought about a partial disintegration of the matrilineage, and have tended
toward the emergence of the elementary family as an economic and legal unit. Under 105
the pressure of these changes, laws[3] were passed in 1933 and 1937 which required all 177
men to register their marriages, gave rights of maintenance to their wives and children, 178
and provided that the whole of a man's personal property be inherited by his wife
and children. In addition, the laws permitted, though they did not require, equal 421
division of the matrilineal estate on a per caput basis[4] between all members. Although [656]
some traditional households remain, it has now become fairly customary for a woman and her immature children jointly to separate their shares of property from those of the rest of their matrilineal group, and to set up a new establishment with the woman's husband. He, in turn, may have abstracted his single share of property from that of his own matrilineal group. Sometimes, the husband himself provides a new house for his elementary family from his own share of property and his private earnings. Sometimes the new house is provided from the property of the wife and children, who receive their husband and father into it as a resident and wage earner. Sometimes husband and wife pool their property and set up a joint establishment.

Given the modern heterogeneity of legal, economic, and residential arrangements, 769
and given also variations in education, interests, and life experience, it is not surprising 178
that cults of the dead reveal differential rates of change. I shall be chiefly concerned
with the traditional cults, although these persist without change in only a few of the [121]
more traditionally patterned households—actually, in fifteen percent of Nāyar households in one Cochin village, and in thirteen percent in one village in Kottayam.

The Nāyars participate in three distinguishable categories of cults of the dead. 769
The first comprises a collective cult, by the matrilineal property group, of the ghosts
of matrilineal forebears, which I call lineage ghosts. This cult is non-Sanskritic. The 121
second category comprises various kinds of offerings by individuals to the spirits of 613
dead kinsfolk at funerals or on the anniversaries of deaths. These cults are Sanskritic in origin. The third category comprises various cults of the ghosts of persons who were not members of the Nāyar's own lineage; I call these alien ghosts. These cults,

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121 like the cult of lineage ghosts, are non-Sanskritic. I discuss the three categories of
613 cults in that order, and then refer briefly to modern changes in the cults.

THE CULT OF LINEAGE GHOSTS

769 Each traditional Nāyar house contains a room devoted to lineage ghosts. Within
353 the shrine are placed small, low stools (*pīṭhams*). On each of these it is believed that
778 a particular ghost comes to sit on the days when offerings are made.

769 In property groups of the aristocratic lineages of village headmen and district
613 chiefs, which own more land than do commoner Nāyars, family histories recorded
in palm leaf documents may contain the names and achievements of twenty or more
554 *kāranavans* extending back over two or three hundred years. In such lineages, whose
[217] property groups divide less frequently than do those of commoner Nāyars, the *kāranavans'*
[778] spirits are housed in a special building in the courtyard south of the ancestral house. Commoner Nāyars care somewhat less for their ancestry. Sometimes they have only three or four stools for their lineage ghosts and remember by name only those who died within the last hundred years or whose lives were in some way remarkable. Remarkable *kāranavans* are those who fought bravely in battles or received honor from chief or king, those who earned property on behalf of their matrilineal groups, or those who died prematurely through accident, murder, epidemic or suicide.

769 Regular offerings are made only to *kāranavans*, for only *kāranavans* hold legal
613 authority and only their names tend to appear in documents which survive for posterity.
782 On the advice of the astrologer, however, a *taravād* may, in emergency, propitiate the ghost of an ancestress or of a man who died before becoming *kāranavan*. But such ghosts are always those who died within the lifetime of living members.

769 The lineage ghosts are regularly propitiated[5] on the new moon days of Karkidagam
796 (July-August) and Tulām (October-November). Food is cooked in the kitchen by
613 women of the matrilineal household, and a large portion is placed on a plantain leaf
261 for each of the ghosts. It includes curried meat and vegetables, fried paddy, beaten
rice, fuits, and sweet puddings of various kinds. Toddy and arrack were traditionally
782 served along with the meal. If a dead *kāranavan* is known to have enjoyed special foods during life, he receives a large portion of these foods. Occasionally, even in the past, individual Nāyars have been vegetarians. The spirits of vegetarian *kāranavans* may not be served with meat and are housed in a separate shrine. When the dishes are prepared, they are carried quickly to the shrine so that the ghosts may partake of their essence before others have tasted or smelled them. The living *kāranavan* places the leaves before the stools in the presence of men junior to him in the property group and then closes the door of the shrine. Age-rank is observed in making the offerings. For each spirit, in addition to its own leaf, is briefly offered the food later placed before the stools of spirits junior to it. Similarly, the vegetables of vegetarian ghosts are first offered to meat eaters who were senior to them, and the vegetables (but not the meat) cooked for meat eating ghosts are first offered to vegetarian ghosts who were their seniors. After a few minutes the *kāranavan* reopens the door and distributes the food, to be eaten by all members of the *taravād*. Women take no part in
[783] offering the food and may not enter the ancestral shrine on this day. They are also
[562] forbidden to enter it during menstrual and birth pollutions, and all members are forbidden entry during the fifteen days of pollution following a death.

000 Traditionally, at the close of offerings to the ghosts, men of the *taravād* might

Traditionally, at the close of offerings to the ghosts, men of the taravād might [
become drunk with toddy and arrack. In this condition, one or more young men 796
might undergo possession by one of the ghosts. He performed a frenzied dance and 769
called out to the assembled members with the voice of the ghost, declaring its will 613
and thanking or threatening the *taravād* on its behalf. I heard of only one *taravād* 273
where this custom persisted. Shamanistic possession by the goddess Bhagavatī or by 787
the god Aiyappan is, however, still prevalent among rural Nāyars, and such religious [776]
possession is still more common among the lower castes. [784]

In some *taravāds*, propitiation of lineage ghosts accompanies that of various deities 769
associated with the *taravād*. Chief of these is the lineage's patron goddess (*dharma* 776
devī). The goddess, though known by different names in different *taravāds*, is always 782
thought of as a species of the generic goddess Bhagavadi or Bhādrakāli, the chief 613
deity of the Nāyars. Each group of Nāyar *taravāds* in a village usually possesses in
common a temple dedicated to Bhādrakāli, but each *taravād* has, in addition, its [346]
own goddess. Cults of the village goddess are more important in Cochin, and of the [184]
taravād goddess, in Kottayam. The village goddess is believed capable of withholding [753]
or inflicting on the population wholesale misfortunes of a kind which strike all men alike—smallpox, cholera, flood, drought, cyclone, cattle epidemic, or defeat in an intervillage feud. Such inflictions result from failure to propitiate the goddess or failure to uphold the moral laws of caste. The *taravād* goddess concerns herself with its members' private morality and inflicts such individual misfortunes as fever, barrenness in women or cattle, or grave financial loss.

In aristocratic *taravāds*, the goddess and the lineage ghosts may nowadays be [346]
housed together in an ancient gynasium (*kalari*) near the ancestral house—a building formerly devoted to the military training of the *taravād's* youth. The ghosts may then be propitiated with cooked food on the same day on which a cock is sacrificed to the patron goddess. In such rites, propitiation of both spirits and goddess are associated with the *taravād's* former martial glory. In the rites there usually figure one or more ancestral swords which the male forebears used during their lives. These swords are the property of the goddess and are propitiated by the *kāranvan* as representatives of the deity.

Lineage ghosts have some concern with the *taravād's* internal morality. If its 769
members fail in hospitality to guests, squander their income, or neglect their property, 626
the ghosts may inflict misfortunes on one or more members of the group. However, 782
failure to propitiate the ghosts correctly is the offence most likely to provoke retri- 613
bution. Conversely, if offerings are made correctly to the ghosts, they will help to preserve the *taravād* from misfortune.

The ghosts vary in their severity and in the wrongs which they punish. A *kāranavan* who amassed much property is most likely to resent extravagance on the part of his successors. Forebears who died prematurely are more punitive than those who died peacefully in old age. All ghosts, however, are somewhat capricious: a small offense may provoke stern retribution, and misdemeanors on the part of one adult may result in the sickness of another or of a child of the property group. In particular, a forebear who was injured or insulted by his juniors during life or after his death may wreak vengeance on the *taravād* even down to the seventh or eighth generation. One instance from a village headman's lineage in Kottayam will illustrate such retri-
bution. In 1798, the property group was dying out for lack of women, and the *kāranavan* [597]
adopted a woman and her children from a related segment of his lineage. After the [429]

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613 *kāranavan*'s death, his adopted successor was too young to manage the property. This
782 passed temporarily into the management of a man from still another branch of the
597 same lineage. When the true claimant came of age he disputed his guardian's management.
429 After a bitter lawsuit the guardian was deposed in a British court. He continued
[578] to live on the *taravād*'s land and to harass his young successor. When the guardian
died, the young *kāranavan* in his anger failed to arrange for the cremation rites until
[753] several days had passed and the corpse had decomposed. The ghost of this proxy *kāranavan* has harrassed his successors ever since, causing many of them to die of diabetes. The present members regard this condition as a decomposition of the body during life. The ghost's anger is so great that propitiations do not wholly avert its vengeance, although special offerings temporarily delay the progress of the disease.

The misfortunes inflicted by lineage ghosts include many forms of sickness, mental
769 disorder, female barrenness and miscarriages, all of which are attributed to actual
613 bodily possession by a ghost. Financial loss, crop failure and the deaths of babies or
776 cows may also result from the ghosts' displeasure. I could find no very clear distinction
753 between the misfortunes inflicted by lineage ghosts and those brought about by the
761 patron goddess, by malevolent alien ghosts, or by the witchcraft or sorcery of enemies.
789 Indeed it is obvious that the Nāyars themselves do not clearly restrict particular misfortunes to particular agents. For on the occasion of a misfortune, the *kāranavan* must often consult the village astrologer (Kanisan) who makes calculations to discover the responsible agent. He then instructs the *kāranavan* how to carry out its propitiation
776 or to accomplish its control.

769 However, my information suggests that some misfortunes may be more likely to
be attributed to some agents than to others. Miscarriages, for example, seem to be
[843] often attributed to ancestresses, to female alien ghosts, or to the patron goddess.
[842] Barrenness is often attributed to the snake gods of the *taravād*, who are believed to guard the fertility of its women. These misfortunes seem to be less often attributed to male ghosts, although some instances are known. Perhaps most important, however, circumstances immediately preceding the misfortune may help to determine the agent. If a forebear has died recently, or if a *taravād* has failed to propitiate its lineage ghosts or patron goddess, the *kāranavan* may not even trouble to consult the astrologer, or the astrologer may merely corroborate his suspicions. Similarly, if a man has an
[754] enemy with whom he has recently quarreled and then himself falls ill with fever, he is like to assume that the enemy has engaged the services of a witch or sorcerer against him. In small villages whose population is stable, moreover, the astrologer makes it his business to know the affairs of his clients and thus to diagnose appropriate causes for their misfortunes.

692 *Sociological analysis.* A satisfactory analysis of the functions of lineage ghosts must take into account those of other supernatural agents and of secular authorities.
[776] Among the Nāyars, supernatural agents have played only a minor role in punishing
[784] offences against men, as distinct from those against themselves. This is undoubtedly because human authorities of various kinds had strong judicial functions, deriving from their incorporation in a kingdom. In the last analysis their authority was backed by the military power of the king or chief. Among Nāyars, civil disputes were tried by village headman or district chief. Certain major crimes against the kingdom's
[688] religious laws were tried in the Raja's court. They included the killing of a cow or a Brahman or fornication with lower caste persons. The killing or assault of a Nāyar

The Killing or assault of a Nayar

outside the lineage led to feuds between lineages or between larger territorial units. 692
In Cochin, the king had more power than in Kottayam to curtail such feuds or confine [628]
them to organized duels for which a fee must be paid. Minor offences against caste
law, such as dining with low caste persons, were tried by the subcaste assembly of the [688]
village and resulted in temporary excommunication of the offender's property group [564]
and the payment of a fine to the village goddess's temple.

The *kāranavan* had the legal right to punish offences within the property group 613
and also those offences against caste law for which the caste held the property group 692
responsible until justice had been done. Incest and murder within the lineage appear [684
to have been punished by expulsion from the *taravād* by the *kāranavan* and from the [682]
caste by the caste assembly. In cases of grave insubordination by a junior member, the
kāranavan had the right to deny him maintenance or access to the ancestral house [564]
until he mended his behavior.

Thus the supernatural agents of the village and the *taravād* primarily acted to 692
force the human authorities to carry out their judicial duties. If, for example, the
caste failed to excommunicate the *taravād* of an individual who had sinned against 626
its religious laws, it was believed that the village goddess would strike the village with 613
epidemic, flood, or some such misfortune. Similarly, if incest within the lineage went undetected or unpunished, the lineage ghosts and the patron goddess might cause the offenders to die or might bring misfortune on the *taravād* as a whole.

The fact that any member of the *taravād* may suffer as a result of the misdemeanors 613
of any other, carries into the realm of supernatural sanctions the collective responsibility of the *taravād* in social and legal affairs. If a man breaks a ritual rule of the 626
caste, his whole *taravād* is polluted and liable for excommunication. If a death or 783
birth occurs, the whole lineage is temporarily polluted and excluded from normal social life. At the back of these norms lies the fact that the *taravād* is an economic
and legal corporation. Its property is owned jointly, and the *taravād* is responsible [421]
for the debts of any one member. Its male members must support each other in
feuds against other lineages. It is not surprising that the concept of being members [476]
one of another in secular affairs is projected into the realm of mystical retributions. [628]

The points at which supernatural agents might replace, or act instead of, human
authorities, appear to have been those where a subordinate was wronged by one who was 769
himself a powerful authority and could manipulate the law. Thus lineage ghosts were
probably particularly effective in punishing or setting to rights misdemeanors of the 626
kāranavan himself. I am uncertain whether, in traditional law, junior members could 613
sue in court for the deposition of an erring *kāranavan*. They certainly possessed this
right in British law, but even so, it was very difficult before 1933 to get rid of a *kāranavan*. [694] The lineage ghosts appear to have provided important sanctions against a *kāranavan's* misdoings, for they brought misfortune on a *taravād* whose *kāranavan* disgraced
its reputation for hospitality or squandered its property. I was told that the former [787]
custom by which a junior member might be possessed by a ghost and voice its threats to the *taravād* added force to the complaints of young men who were cheated by
their *kāranavans*. The fact that only the *kāranavan* may propitiate the lineage ghosts [782]
points up both his responsibility to the ghosts to ensure good conduct and prosperity in his *taravād*, and also his responsibility to his juniors to ensure the favor of the ghosts.

I have myself recorded no case in which lineage ghosts were believed to have actually prevented a crime on the part of a *kāranavan*, as distinct from punishing one. V. K.

626 613 [173] Raman Menon, however, records a legend of a mother's brother who deliberately betrayed a nephew, whom he hated, to the vengeance of a lineage currently feuding with his own.[6] The nephew was to have been killed by his enemies on the following day. But in the night his mother prayed for the return of her son's elder brother who was absent in a distant land. The lineage ghosts miraculously brought home the brother in time to save his junior's life. It must be remembered, moreover, that the belief that the deceased himself would become a lineage ghost capable of wreaking vengeance probably formed a sanction against intralineage murder.

562 [782] [841] [829] Women are excluded from the ancestral shrine during their pollutions and may not enter it on the day of propitiations. The former prohibition is related to the whole concept of bad sacredness associated with emissions of the body, which prevents women from touching or eating with others or entering any sacred place during their pollutions. That women should be totally excluded from the shrine on days of propitiation seems also to relate to the general position of women in the society. As in most of the higher Hindu castes, women traditionally played a very minor role in economic production, for the work of production was done by the lower castes. A few women were scholars, and a few were even trained in arms, but the Nāyars' occupation as soldiers in general tended to exclude women from work outside the home. The bearing of children was by far the chief value of women. Correspondingly, women were subordinates in the legal sphere. They were throughout life under the legal guardianship of men, might not take part in public deliberations, and might not act as witnesses in the village court. The legal subordination of women may have been partly connected with their comparative lack of value in economic production, and perhaps partly, with the great moral authority they derived from childbearing—for female procreation was very highly valued and male envy of these functions was overt. The cult of lineage [769] ghosts supports the correct operation of male legal authority within the *taravād*. The exclusion of women from participation in it, and their exclusion from the shrine on days when their procreative functions were most apparent, perhaps expresses in a formal manner the notion that the power which women derived from these functions was polar and even antipathetic to the legal and economic power of men.

769 613 626 182 Although the lineage ghosts had only subsidiary judicial functions, their cult served in several ways indirectly to maintain right relationships within the *taravād*. First, a *kāranavan* who respected and correctly propitiated his own forebears provided a role model of piety for his juniors in their relations with living elders. Second, the ghosts, as we have seen, provided some sanctions against a *kāranavan's* ill treatment 769 171 182 of his wards. Levy,[7] in connection with the Chinese ancestor cult, has pointed out the importance of having supernatural agents to whom a human authority owes deference, in social units where the authority is not chosen by his subordinates and cannot easily be manipulated or removed by them. For the authority's good behavior toward his subordinates then becomes a part of his sanctioned duty toward his own supernatural authorities. In the Chinese cult, which in this respect resembles the Brahman, the head of a family must care for his patrilineal descendants because it is part of his duty to the ancestors to provide happy and prosperous offspring. For 769 613 626 182 these, by their own later ancestral offerings, will save the forebears' spirits, and his own, from suffering in the life after death. In the Nāyar case, the *kāranavan* must keep his *taravād* in good order because if he does not do so the lineage ghosts may inflict suffering on all, including himself.

Third, the ghost cult obviously provides one explanation for the cause of mis- 769
fortunes, and offers a course of action whereby these may supposedly be allayed. 613
Further, the *taravād's* collective responsibility for its misfortunes in a sense makes 182
the ghosts a common threat to its members, for all may suffer from their anger. The
ghost cult thus enhances the sense of unity and common destiny of *taravād* members.

Psychological analysis. The problem of the circumstances under which cults of 769
punitive ancestors arise does not seem to have been solved in culture and personality 171
writing. Freud[8] derived all forms of fear of, and taboos relating to, the dead, from ambivalence felt to these kinsfolk during life. Mead[9] in 1930 granted a probable universality of ambivalence to the dead, but pointed out that whereas Western Europeans tend to emphasize affection and grief toward the dead and to suppress hostility, some societies give ceremonial emphasis to the hostility and suppress the expression of affection and grief. Others appear to permit an equal expression of both hostility and grief, and Mead thought that personal conflicts relating to the dead may be almost eliminated when both attitudes find ceremonial expression. She argued that the choice of which attitude should be uppermost in ceremonial expression was "a function of the civilization in which the individual lives," but did not at that time attempt to relate attitudes to the dead to specific types of relationships with the living.

Opler,[10] in an analysis of Chiracahua and Mescalero Apache usages relating to the dead, has shown that these exhibit mixed feelings of grief and hostility, and has derived these from ambivalence to living relatives engendered in the matrilocal extended family. But Opler's analysis, convincing though it is, leaves us again with the problem that probably all social relations, and especially all kinship relations, are to some extent ambivalent. Why then do some societies express ambivalence in mixed attitudes to the dead, others in predominantly hostile attitudes with the benevolent aspects suppressed, and still others in predominantly benevolent attitudes with the hostile aspects suppressed? A more intricate analysis of types of ambivalence is required. Attempts in this direction have been made by a number of recent writers, notably Kardiner, Fortes, Roheim, Hsu, Mead in later writings, and Whiting and Child[11] in a cross cultural survey of beliefs about evil spirits and demons. Building on the theories of these writers, I shall try to find meaningful connections between Nāyar attitudes to lineage ghosts and their attitudes to living matrilineal kinsfolk
of the preceding generation. 181

Nāyar lineage ghosts are oriented toward the living. Although Nāyars state that 769
good spirits go to a heaven of sensual pleasures and bad spirits to a hell of physical [772]
torture, they do not elaborate this belief or refer to it in connection with the cult of
lineage ghosts. They believe that their forebears were sorry to die and are envious of the living. The forebears retain affection for their lands and houses and continue to be interested in tangible good things, particularly in food and drink. These attitudes appear to form part of a general this-worldly attitude among traditional Nāyars. As a caste, their chief interests have been in land and houses, political power, and military
exploits. They are not ritual specialists. Most Nāyar men and many women were [212]
traditionally literate in Malayālam. Malayālam poems, dramas, and translations [538]
based on the great epics, the *puraṇas* and the *Bhāgavad Gītā*, brought the content of
much Sanskrit literature to them in a comprehensible form. Nevertheless, comparatively few Nāyars were philosophers or scholars. Among the great majority, ascetic [785]
practices were oriented chiefly toward averting misfortunes in this life rather than to [782]
accumulating religious merit against the life to come.

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181 accumulating religious merit against the life to come. With regard to their interests in this world, the ancestors resemble their descendants.

769 Lineage ghosts are powerful beings who can help or harm the living. The effect
which they exert on the fortunes of the living is much greater than that exerted by
the living on their own. They can aid their descendants by preserving crops, cattle,
houses, and children, but their punitive characteristics are those most emphasized.
[782] Offerings to ghosts are designed less toward seeking positive good than toward averting
misfortune. There is no idealization of the ghosts as morally superior beings. They
are human in their failings of envy and bad temper, and indeed, even more capricious
than the living. They may punish wrongdoing with a degree of justice, but they do
[784] not look sympathetically into the hearts of propitiants, and are almost as likely to
exact vengeance for accidental mistakes in the performance of rites as for wilful
[782] immorality. Nāyars do not attempt to enter intimate spiritual communion with them
[782] or to please them by inner suffering and renunciation. Rather, the ghosts are bought
off with gifts of food in order that their envy may be appeased.

604 These attitudes to the ancestors[13] are, it seems, directly related to relationships
613 with the senior generation among the living. A man's relationship with his mother's
brother is, from childhood, one of stern discipline. All mother's brothers have authority
578 over their nephews and in traditional households may inflict corporal punishment on
561 adolescents. There is a marked lack of intimacy between senior and junior men within
the *taravād*, and the sanction on a nephew's good conduct is fear of punishment rather
than fear over loss of love. Good *kāranavans* are devoted to their juniors in a stern
and dutiful manner. They are proud of their *taravād* as against the rest of the world,
but they do not exhibit personal tenderness to their juniors. Power is vested in the
senior generation; there is little feeling that a nephew could wield power over his
uncle by withdrawing his emotional support. Great emphasis is placed on a formal
etiquette of dignified and respectful behavior, amounting to partial avoidance, but
neither party need feel that he loves the other in his heart. Nephews will not normally
readily reveal hostility toward their uncles before outsiders, for they wish to preserve
the dignity of the *taravād*. But they do publicly acknowledge hostility under provoca-
tion, and more frequently accuse the uncle of aggression toward themselves. That
hostility is a normal component of relationships with mother's brothers is proverbial
among Nāyars. They recognize this as the reason why a formal etiquette of behavior
is indispensable. And even in spite of the stringent rules regulating the intercourse
of mother's brother and sister's son, physical aggression between them may occur.
[626] In spite of the supernatural sanctions against violence within the lineage, I heard
several stories of nephews who poisoned or stabbed their mothers' brothers. Aged
kāranavans of large *taravāds* often complain of their loneliness. They may not behave
intimately with their juniors and know in their hearts that they are hated and envied.
"Indeed," as one Nāyar remarked, "in an old-fashioned *taravād* the position of the
kāranavan is not safe." The office of *kāranavan* is, of course, much coveted. Junior
men commonly number themselves off in order of age-rank as second, third, fourth
men, etc., and with divided feelings await the demise of those above them which
[593] will raise them to higher rank. The relationship between older and younger brothers,
own or classificatory, is only slightly less stern and formal than that between mother's
brother and sister's son.

604 The relationship of a woman with her mother's brother is less harsh than that
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between males, for a woman does not offer the threat of a rival to her male superior. 604
Difference of sex, however, makes this relationship even more formal than that 562
between men. Women do not appear frequently in the presence of their mothers'
brothers. They occupy separate wings of the house, and intercourse between the
sexes is severely restricted. Toward older brothers a woman's relationship is restricted 593
almost to the point of avoidance. If she commits a misdemeanor, especially a sexual 562
one, a woman immediately fears men senior to her in the *taravād*. Formerly, she 684
might be executed by her brothers if she had sexual relations with a lower caste man.
In an orthodox household today, a girl who becomes pregnant by a low caste man
will be either expelled from the house by her male seniors or, at best, will be thrashed
and will receive much subsequent harsh treatment.

It may be wondered why, since women are excluded from legal authority and from 562
participation in the cult, ancestresses are believed capable of harming *taravād* members. 613
The explanation of this, too, seems to lie in the content of relationships with the 593
mother and other natal kinswomen. Women have no legal authority over their juniors. 769
Indeed, the mother of a *kāranavan* is herself under his jurisdiction. Women do, however, exercise great moral authority over their children throughout their lives. In 184
Cochin with duolocal residence, the care of children under about the age of five is 562
almost entirely in the hands of women in a traditional *taravād*. Their fathers have no 613
rights over them, the *kāranavan* is too remote a figure to concern himself with details 593
of child training, and junior men of the *taravād* are often absent from home. A mother 591
commonly treats her small children with indulgence, but is necessarily also the source
of many frustrations, while the maternal grandmother and women of her generation
are strict disciplinarians.

In Kottayam, where residence was traditionally avunculocal, children were
frequently brought up in the *taravād* of the father. In such households today, the
child has an intimate, affectionate relationship with his father who undertakes a
part of his personal care. When the father's *kāranavan* is also the mother's father (as
fairly often occurs with cross-cousin marriage), he and his wife treat the child with
indulgence. Otherwise, they tend to have only a slight relationship with him and may
even resent his claim to temporary hospitality in their house. The mother is, in these [604]
circumstances, again the child's chief mentor and disciplinarian, and he learns very
early that his mother's brothers, though living elsewhere, are the real authorities
whom he must respect and to whom he will return at adolescence, as their heir. In 613
both areas the reverence acquired for the mother is perpetuated throughout life. 593
Her wishes and those of his elder sister take precedence over those of a man's wife, to
whom he has a very subsidiary attachment. The relationship with the mother is 184
clearly characterized by great depth of emotion and by greater tenderness than that
toward male seniors. Even so, it appears that in this relationship too, the emotion is
usually consciously ambivalent. I illustrate this statement briefly with reference to the 159
relationship between only one man and his mother, but it is characteristic of many. 593
This Cochin Nāyar, aged thirty-five, visited us stealthily in the evenings and kept
his visits from his mother, telling her he had business in the town. He was afraid
she would become jealous, and angry with him for eating Christian food. She watched
over him, upbraiding him when he spent much time in the house of his wife and children. He took care to be prompt for meals, and although he found her food inadequate
he would not complain in case he appeared to slight her cookery. He had had a high

159 school education and disbelieved in much traditional Nāyar ritual. Yet he once
593 arranged for the performance of a sacrifice to a minor malevolent deity, Kuttichāttan,
because his mother thought that this demon had killed their calf. On this occasion
he complained that he found her control irksome, and wished he had younger brothers
who would care for her and allow him to travel more. "I love *and* fear her," he said,
"Sometimes I am angry with her." "But you don't say anything?" "Ah, no, nothing!"
593 Far more than in most of the patrilineal castes of South India, therefore, a man's
769 mother remains the supreme, if somewhat resented, moral authority. There is no
wonder that after death a woman should be believed capable of punishing her children
and grandchildren if they displease her.

769 Even so, ancestresses play only a minor part in the cult of forebears, subordinate,
613 as in life, to the spirits of *kāranavans*. For the cult of lineage ghosts too closely resembles
776 everyday adult relationships in the *taravād* for women to be accorded a
paramount place within it. In religion, the supreme moral authority of the mother
593 finds its expression rather in the cult of the goddess Bhagavadi. Bhagavadi is lifted above
the sphere of kinship relationships, yet as patron of the *taravād* and the village she is
stated to be the supernatural counterpart of the mother. Her attributes are more awesome
and archaic than are those of ancestresses, and it seems probable that in her are
portrayed very early infantile fantasies of the mother, corresponding to those of the
period when she was the only significant object in the child's world. She inspires
devotion and tenderness but, in her aspect as Bhādrakāli, she is also a horrendous
demon, having snakes for hair, talons for fingernails, fangs for teeth, brandishing
weapons in her arms, and with her mouth dripping blood. Her oral aggression is
emphasized, for she is a devourer of male demons who dare to oppose her power.
Bhagavadi is the great deity of both men and women among Nāyars, but she is more
concerned with men than with women. She is the goddess of war, she possesses men
more frequently than women, and it is men who devote themselves intensively to
769 her cult. Ancestresses, on the other hand, seem to be somewhat more likely to attack
593 women than men. The different relationships of men and of women to their mothers
may be relevant in this connection. For a woman, the relationship with the mother
is less awesome, less inspiring, more intimate and realistic but also more irksome and
[613] rivalrous than for a man. A woman replaces her mother in the *taravād*, and as she
grows up, rivalry, including sexual rivalry, is often apparent between them. Women
retain the right to administer corporal punishment to their daughters until adolescence
or marriage, whereas men earlier pass under the discipline of their mothers'
brothers and appear to retain a more childlike image of the mother. Nuances in the
cult of the ancestors and the great deities appear to reflect this differential relationship
of men and women to the senior generation.

184 In Kottayam, with avunculocal residence, fathers traditionally had a protective
and intimate relationship with their children. It might be expected that the father's
593 ghost would figure in some way in the cult of ghosts. This is not the case. The cults
769 are practically identical in Kottayam and Cochin, and although a woman and her
613 immature children in Kottayam lived in the house of the woman's husband, the
husband's lineage ghosts were not believed capable of affecting their welfare. This is
apparently because, both in Kottayam and Cochin, the ancestor cult mirrors the
legal structure and collective responsibility of the *taravād*, which are identical in
the two areas. The father's ghost has no place among the lineage ghosts because,

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however intimately related to his children he may have been, he belongs to a different 593
economic and legal corporation. In death as in life, he has no publicly supported 769
authority over his children. Children do have a personalized relationship with their 613
father's spirit in Kottayam, however, which is discussed below.

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The emotional content of the relationships with lineage ghosts among the Nāyars 769
does not depend upon the fact that they follow matrilineal descent, although of
course the role-structure of the cult is determined by this fact. The Īravas[13] of this 613
area, who are tenant cultivators of lower rank than the Nāyars, have small patrilineal 171
lineages and patrilocal extended families, cross-cut, traditionally, by dispersed exog- 174
amous matrilineal clans. The Īrava patrilineage is called a *taravād* and is headed by 184
its senior male member as *kāranavan*. The Īravas have a cult of dead patrilineal *kārana-
vans* almost identical in emotional and belief content with that of Nāyars. So also do
the Coorgs, a patrilineal caste of the small province east of Kottayam, well described
by Srinivas.[14] The common form of the cult and the similarity of detail in this general
area must undoubtedly be attributed to diffusion or to a common historical origin.
Nevertheless, the question then arises of why this cult was not diffused to all castes of
the southwest coast, notably to the Brahmans. Conversely, we may ask why the
Brahmanical cult of ancestors, which is quite different in form and content, did not
entirely replace the ancestral cults of the non-Brahman castes centuries ago—for
these castes have been exposed to Brahmanical culture probably for two thousand K
years and have in fact adopted many elements of that culture. Moreover, cults of 769
punitive ancestors similar to the Nāyar cult are very widespread in the world. It 171
seems certain that whatever their historical origin, the reasons for the perpetuation
of these cults must be sought in the role-structure of the kinship system and the 602
emotional content of relationships with major figures of the senior generation within 174
it. I would suggest that cults of predominantly punitive ancestors are likely to be 561
accompanied by kinship relationships in which the senior generation retains control 578
over the junior until late in life, but in which major figures of the senior generation
are not highly idealized. It seems probable that the chief sanction against value-
violating behavior will be fear of some tangible form of punishment, rather than
fear over loss of love, and that although open expression of aggression toward dis-
ciplinary figures is controlled, the aggressive component in the ambivalent relationship K
to seniors will be strong and not deeply repressed. Among Nāyars and Īravas of my 769
acquaintance, at all events, a man may even be conscious of his ambivalence toward 602
seniors, and to the extent that he is not able fully to accept his own aggressive feelings 154
he seems to project these in the belief that his superiors are even more punitive than 578
they may really be. A portion of this projected aggression his culture encourages him
to displace on the figures of lineage ghosts, who can inflict even more serious punish- 561
ments than can living superiors. As is frequently the case in our own society, the K
mechanism of projection seems to be closely allied with that of introjection, which [753]
appears in the belief that sickness and mental derangement are caused by the entry
of a hostile ghost into the body of the patient. T

The nature of traditional Nāyar relationships to their lineage ghosts may be clarified 769
by contrasting them with those of Brahmans. I choose for this purpose the Tamil
Brahmans of Tanjore,[15] with whom I am best acquainted. This caste of landowners 613
and ritual specialists has patrilocal extended families and patrilineal lineages. Headship 564
of the extended family does not, as among Īravas and Coorgs, pass down the line of 596

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613 brothers and then to the junior generation. At the death of a man, his eldest son be-
comes head of the household until all the sons are adult and can divide their property
564 and move into separate homes. Within the extended family each man must have a
596 son of his own, or an adopted son, who will be his heir, perform his funeral rites, and
make offerings for his spirit after death. There is no collective cult of lineage ghosts
as among the Nāyars, Iravas and Coorgs. Each son propitiates in his own home the
[782] ghosts of his father and mother, paternal grandfather and grandmother, and paternal
great-grandfather and great-grandmother. Offerings of water are made thrice daily to
these ancestors, of water and gingelly seeds on the new moon days of each month,
and of cooked rice balls and other objects on the anniversaries of the parents' deaths.
The ancestors are not thought to be interested in the material affairs of the living
and cannot help or harm them. Offerings are not made ostensibly to propitiate them
but to ensure their own safety in the life after death. If the deceased's sins were not
769 expiated before death it is believed that his spirit must endure terrible physical torture
596 in the abode of Yama, the god of death, before proceeding to *pithiru lokam*, the world
564 of the ancestors. The offerings strengthen the spirit if it is in hell and help it to escape
[772] therefrom. In any case, even a spirit already in the ancestral world can fall down into
783] hell if offerings are not made by dutiful descendants. After a period in the abode of
the ancestors the spirit is reborn, in high or low estate according to its merit or demerit
during life and according to the degree of merit acquired for it by the piety and
offerings of its descendants. After many rebirths and the acquisition of great merit,
the spirit merges in the universal soul. Village Brahmans believe that the correct
performance of ancestral ceremonies is instrumental to this end.

769 These beliefs appear to be associated both with the general philosophy of the
779 Brahmans and with the emotional content of their kinship relationships. The Brah-
564 mans, unlike the Nāyars, are ritual specialists. Their religion teaches that the pleasures
181 of this world are illusory. The aim of the soul is to escape the cycle of rebirths and
find union with the divine. Only the spirits of those who died prematurely and violently
are believed still interested in this life. Weighed down by sin and desire, they hover
[753] about the site of their deaths awaiting the summons of Yama when their appropriate
life span has passed. Such spirits may inflict sickness upon those who cross their paths,
but the spirits of normal ancestors are not at all punitive.

769 The relationship between a man and his paternal ancestors reflects the deep personal
devotion and mutual dependence between father and son during life. From early
593 childhood a son is taught that aggressive thoughts, let alone acts, toward the parents
564 are gravely sinful and to be shunned. The parents are highly idealized and enveloped
783 in an aura of sanctity. Children are taught that the father and the mother are the
first gods to be worshipped. Among individual Brahmans, the expression of any form
of aggression toward the father appears to be attended by deep guilt. Neither should
a son permit himself the thought that his father is punitive toward him. In everyday
etiquette the relationship is one of comparative intimacy and informality. Corporal
[861] punishment is very seldom inflicted, and the chief sanction against bad behavior
seems to be not fear of punishment but extreme emotional dependence and fear of
rejection. Individual Brahmans, on the occasion of the sickness or death of their
parents, have exhibited to me great guilt, blaming themselves for youthful impiety,
and fearing that the ill which has now come on their parents is the result of their own
misdemeanor. From case histories there seems no doubt that the relationship with the

4: Gough E-5 (1947-1949, 1952)1958 AW11 Kerala AW11
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father is highly ambivalent; for as head of the family he is the source of many frustrations. 769
After death, aggressive elements do seem to appear covertly in the horrifying 593
picture of hell and in the fear that by failing to perform the ancestral rites correctly, 564
and to live piously, the son may imperil his ancestors' souls. But aggression against 783
the parents seems to be too deeply repressed for them to be thought of, alive or dead, as themselves aggressive. Instead, the Brahman seems to effect a reaction formation against his aggression which appears in unusual concern for the ancestors' safety, and in the anxious need to perform numerous rites which will ward off from them the punishment of the god of death. I do not mean to suggest that every Brahman handles aggression toward elders solely and precisely in this way, or that every Nāyar handles the same troublesome impulses by projection. I would suggest, however, that both socialization and belief system encourage these different modes of handling aggression toward authorities, and that a change in any one of these areas would be likely to
produce change in them all. K

A more apt contrast with the Nāyar cult would be that of the Nambūdiri Brahmans, 769
who live in contact with the Nāyars and from whom the Nāyars have derived 564
many elements of their religion. Unfortunately, the religious orthodoxy of the Nambūdiris [114]
prevented me from studying them intimately. The information which I [171]
have from Nambūdiri informants and from literature[16] indicates however that their
ancestral cult is similar to that of the Tamil Brahmans. Its role structure is different, K
for in the Nambūdiri patrilineal household only the eldest son may have Nambūdiri 576
descendants. Younger sons may have Nāyar children, but these are totally excluded 564
from the performance of rites for their dead fathers. Headship of the Nambūdiri 769
family, like that of the Īrava, passes from the eldest son down the line of brothers and then drops to the eldest son of the junior generation. There is both a collective cult of dead patrilineal heads and also separate anniversary rites for individual dead. Both types of ritual take the Sanskritic form. If the deceased was a younger son, his eldest brother's sons perform these rites. Nambūdiris hold the same beliefs about
the fate of the soul as do Tamil Brahmans and, like them, deny that the spirits of K
ancestors are punitive. The informal intimacy of behavior between men of senior T
and junior generations in the Nambūdiri household is also very similar to that among [602]
Tamil Brahmans, and contrasts with the formal etiquette of partial avoidance between
Nāyar matrilineal kinsmen. It is somewhat extraordinary and interesting to note T
that the Nambūdiri Brahmans and the Nāyars, through centuries of close proximity K 602
and hypergamous marital unions, have retained totally different legal and emotional 769
relationships within their respective unilineal units, with correspondingly different
beliefs connected with their ancestral cults. K

Although the Nāyars' relationships with ghosts are similar in important respects to 769
those with living elders, they are significantly different in others. The ghosts' powers are 593
not limited by the demands of reality, and they can magically protect and punish in
fantastic ways in which human elders cannot. As Fortes points out for the Tallensi K
ancestors, the ghosts appear "as a standardized and highly elaborated picture of the [171]
parents as they might appear to a young child in real life—mystically omnipotent, capricious, vindictive, and yet beneficent."[17] It is while a child is comparatively helpless
that his elders appear in this form. As he grows up and gains competence, the elders K
shrink to human proportions. But in some areas of living a Nāyar was traditionally 769
helpless throughout life—with regard to flood and drought, many sicknesses, and 731

769 731 crop and cattle blight. These he continued to explain in terms of a childlike picture of powerful supernatural elders.

769 783 154 [562] It must also be noticed that although there are slight differences in the relationships of men and women to lineage ghosts, the ghosts are, in general, far more alike than are matrilineal elders. A man's relation with his mother is very different from that with his mother's brother, and his relations with different mother's brothers are by no means uniform. Yet the ghosts are collectively regarded as both protective and dangerously punitive. It seems probable, therefore, that a Nāyar reprojects his own superego onto the standardized, institutionalized image of lineage ghosts which his culture provides him. For the superego, like the ghosts, is a composite of the prohibitions imposed by a number of elders. The superego is also formed in part from the individual's own aggression, which he defends against by projecting it upon the generalized parental image which he has internalized. If this view is correct, reprojection of the harsh superego onto ghosts in times of misfortune must serve to reduce guilt. For the offences which the ghosts ostensibly punish with sickness are often inadvertent or trivial ones, such as failure in the correct performance of rites. The astrologer's diagnosis may thus permit him to focus his generalized guilt (concerning deeper, unconscious aggressive impulses) upon a specific, minor lapse of duty on the part of [782] himself or one of his kinsmen. He is then able to take practical steps to alleviate his guilt through propitiation of the supernatural agents. The Brahman's offerings on behalf of his ancestors also seem to serve as an alleviation of guilt, but in a different manner. For instead of reprojecting his harsh superego onto ancestral figures, the Brahman apparently projects it wholly outside the area of human relations onto a vindictive god of death, whose hell he believes endangers both his own and his parents' souls. He appears to alleviate his guilt through rites designed to preserve them and himself from this fate.

769 182 626 If it is true that the Nāyar reprojects his own superego upon the lineage ghosts, this would explain why the ghosts are so much more punitive than are living elders. They are thus fitting agents for the infliction of natural misfortunes, which in fact fall more heavily and capriciously than do the punishments of living elders. The fact that all members of the *taravād* are enabled to focus projected aggression and guilt feelings upon the ghosts probably enhances the internal solidarity of the *taravād*, by lifting a portion of these troublesome feelings from inside to outside the group. The cult thus brings together in rites of propitiation these very kinsmen who (in one aspect of their relationship) hate each other, and forges renewed bonds of mutual devotion in the appeasement of beings whom all of them fear.

FUNERALS AND ANNIVERSARIES: THE SANSKRITIC CULTS

76 184 564 Although they retained the non-Sanskritic cults of ghosts, the Nāyars long ago adopted many Brahmanical usages in connection with funerals and with rites on the anniversary of a death. Such usages include cremation rather than burial of the dead, and offerings of rice balls (*bali*), water, and other oblations in the days of pollution following a death. As among Nambūdiri Brahmans, the chief heir, at the end of the period of pollution, enters a period of ascetic mourning (*dīkṣā*) for one year in Cochin and for forty-one days in Kottayam. At the end of this time he may dispose of the bones and ashes in a sacred river. He makes *bali* offerings to the spirit on each day of his mourning, and at its close, performs final offerings which unite the deceased with

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his forebears. Thereafter he offers rice balls and other oblations in a *śrāddham* ceremony on each anniversary of the death.

Many of these customs are of long standing among the Nāyars. Barbosa[18] reported in 1518 that Nāyar royalty observed *dīkṣā* for the dead in the same manner as Nambūdiris. Sheikh Zein-ud-Deen[19] recorded the custom for commoner Nāyars in 1579. Linschoten[20] reported in 1598 that Nāyars normally cremated their dead. Today, Nāyar death and anniversary rites are almost identical in form with those of Nambūdiris. During the period of death pollution they employ a lower matrilineal caste to instruct them in the rites. (In Cochin, Chidigans fulfill this function; in South Malabar, Attikūrssis; and in North Malabar, Mārārs.) The same caste assists Nambūdiri Brahmans to prepare the ritual materials for their funerals, and has clearly transmitted the Brahmanical rites to the Nāyars. Similarly, at the end of the death pollution on the sixteenth day, during the *dīkṣā* period, and on anniversary days, Nāyars are instructed in their oblations by a priest of a degraded subcaste of Brahmans. (This subcaste is the Elayads in Cochin and South Malabar and the Nambidis in North Malabar.) A few peculiarly non-Brahmanical rites do, however, survive. In Kottayam, poorer Nāyars among commoners customarily bury their dead.[21] In both areas those who burn the dead bury the bones and ashes in a pot under a jack-fruit tree outside the ancestral house near the ancestor shrine. Some leave the bones there permanently and consider that the ghost remains near the bones and the ancestral house. Others dig up the bones after the period of mourning, dispose of half of them in a sacred river, and return the other half to the grave. The bones of *kāranavans* are sometimes [613] placed on an open platform under a jack-fruit tree, to which food offerings are made on days of propitiation. Other rites spring from the Nāyar view that the ghost requires appeasement rather than mere assistance to another world. Brahmans, for example, pour holy water into the mouth of a dying man to purify him for entry into the world of ancestors. Old-fashioned Nāyars offer rice gruel as a last act of appeasement.

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Even the Sanskritic rites are in fact so adapted to Nāyar requirements that they carry a quite different emphasis of meaning from that associated with them by Brahmans. First, the role-structure of the rites is, of course, completely adapted to the descent system. A Nambūdiri deceased's chief mourner is his or her eldest son, or, if there is no Nambūdiri son, the eldest brother's son. A Nāyar woman's chief mourner is her eldest son; that of a man, the man next junior to him in the property group. But all males of the *taravād* junior to the deceased make subsidiary *bali* offerings to him in the period of pollution. Brahman spouses observe mourning and death pollution for each other. Nāyar spouses traditionally observe no mourning or pollution for each other, for they belong to different *taravāds* and have no mutual legal obligations. If a Nāyar dies in a wife's house, his body must traditionally be returned to his *taravād* for cremation. Shortly before or after the death of her husband, a woman goes to view his body for the last time. She is then ceremonially conducted out of the house on the north side—the side opposite to that from which the god of death arrives. She is returned to her natal home, and after this she may never reenter her dead husband's house. In Cochin, where men traditionally had no obligations to their children, a child did not observe death pollution for his genitor. But in North Malabar, [591] where children have an intimate relationship with the father in avunculocal residence during childhood, a man's sons make offerings for him during death pollution, and the eldest son is second-in-command to the chief mourner at the cremation. The

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184 eldest son also traditionally observed *dīkṣā* for his father along with the matrilineal heir.

564 Age-rank within the *taravād* finds expression in the rites. Among Nambūdiri
613 Brahmans, if an unmarried but initiated boy dies, his father may perform his funeral
[775] and anniversary rites. For the souls of father and son are dependent upon one another for salvation. But among Nāyars, a man may not take part in funeral rites for one junior to him in the *taravād*, for respect toward juniors is inappropriate. A Nāyar who dies leaving no junior old enough to act as chief mourner is therefore buried without ceremony and no rites are performed for his ghost.

769 Nāyars have adopted the Brahmanical belief that funeral and anniversary rites
184 assist the spirit in its passage to another world, and that immersion of the ashes in
564 sacred water affords it peace. Like the Brahmans, they acknowledge the theory of rebirth, and hold that a spirit which is correctly propitiated after death is likely to
[782] be eventually reborn in a high estate. As in the case of the Brahmans, the theory of *karma* provides the Nāyars with a moral rationale for their high position in the caste system, and it is chiefly in this connection that I have heard it quoted. It is difficult to discover how old are Sanskritic beliefs concerning the soul among Nāyars, and they are not uniform at the present day. Most Nāyars use the word *pretam* to refer to the ghost or the soul in all contexts. This is a Sanskrit word (*preta*) for a malevolent ghost, but it is used by Nambūdiri Brahmans only for alien malevolent ghosts. A few Nāyars stated that that aspect of the soul which is reborn is the *ātmā*. This Sanskrit word is used by Brahmans for the soul in connection with rebirth and with union with the universal soul, called *paramātmā*. The *ātmā*, these Nāyar informants say, is neither malevolent nor beneficent. It cannot be understood by ordinary people and is a subject for philosophers. The *pretam*, by contrast, is the punitive ghost of an ancestor or of one who died violently. It can be only too easily understood even by the ignorant and does not require deep study. This belief in two souls, or in a soul and a ghost, may be modern, for it was given by only a few younger informants.

769 At all events, the Sanskritic rites of death are customarily adapted by Nāyars to
184 belief in a malevolent *pretam*, for at every step fear of the *pretam* is referred to. Whereas
564 Brahmans perform the rites ostensibly in order that the soul may be at peace, Nāyars have traditionally performed them in active fear of the ghost's retaliation should its
782 comfort not be ensured. During the days of pollution, Nāyars offer rice balls before a palmyra stem set up in the yard before the ancestral house. The *pretam* of the deceased is believed to enter this stem, and it is believed that it will attack the *taravād* with further death or with sickness if the offerings are not satisfactorily performed. During the offerings each Nāyar propitiant in turn wears round his waist a piece of cloth torn from the wrapper of the corpse in order to associate himself with the spirit. But inside this cloth Nāyars also tuck a knife, blade uppermost, to ward off the spirit's
[825] attack. After the offerings are made, both Brahmans and Nāyars clap their wet hands to summon crows to eat the rice balls. If the crows do not come, it is believed that the spirit has not received the offering. This may then be repeated on the advice of the astrologer. In Tanjore, Brahmans seemed to regret the miscarriage of the offering
[787] only for the sake of the spirit. But Nāyars regard it as an extremely evil omen, and fear the ghost's retaliation in the form of a second death within the *taravād*. The Brahmanical ceremonies themselves contain rites of segregation from the deceased
[764] which are susceptible to the interpretation that those who perform them wish to be rid of him. Such, for example, is the rite of dashing a pot of water at the head end of

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the pyre toward the close of the cremation, and the disposal of the bones and ashes 184
in a river far from the ancestral house. But among my Brahman informants in Tanjore 564
these rites were carried out without explanation, and hostility to the dead seemed to 782
find no conscious expression. Nāyars performed the same rites in full consciousness 764
of fear and hostility to the ghost. Even at the end of the *dīkṣā* period when the chief
mourner has deposited the ashes in a river, Nāyars believe that Bhairava and Ḳāla, [776]
messengers of the god of death, dog the mourner's footsteps back to his ancestral
house. He is out of danger from them only after performing final offerings in the house
which gather the ghost to its forebears and thus appease its wrath. Nāyars, like Brahmans, [152]
express grief at a death and engage in ceremonial weeping, although neither
caste weeps with the loud vehemence characteristic of the lower polluting castes. But
whereas Brahmans give full expression to grief and guilt, suppressing the hostile
aspect of their ambivalence, Nāyars perform the same rites in consciousness both of
grief and of hostile fear of the dead.

The traditional Nāyar rites and beliefs illustrate the common phenomenon of 76
elements of symbolic culture being diffused from one group to another and endowed 184
with a new emotional content and meaning in accordance with the needs of the
receiving group. The Nāyars presumably adopted Brahmanical death rites centuries 564
ago because of the prestige associated with certain distinctive customs of the highest
group in the caste society. The extensive contact with Brahmans afforded to them by
hypergamous marital unions gave them an unusual exposure to Sanskrit culture.
But through centuries of exposure to Brahmanical custom the Nāyars retained such [782]
characteristically "low caste" features as animal sacrifice to punitive deities, religious
possession, and propitiation of punitive lineage ghosts. I would argue that the Nāyars
and lower castes retained these customs because the emotional dispositions engendered
by their occupations and social relations—in particular, their ways of handling aggression
and relationships to authorities—are different from those of Brahmans. Presumably
also the Nāyars adapted the Sanskritic death rites to their own role structure
and belief system, because these grew out of and served to uphold norms of relationships
within the *taravād*.

The Cults of Alien Ghosts

In addition to lineage ghosts, Nāyars believe that the spirits of persons of any 769
caste who died prematurely from epidemic, accident, murder, or suicide can bring 184
misfortune to the living. Such ghosts, which I call alien ghosts, haunt the neighborhood
where they died and are particularly malevolent. The misfortunes they inflict include
many kinds of sickness; madness, female barrenness, cattle deaths, house fires, or
poltergeist activities. Like lineage ghosts, most alien ghosts are called *pretams*. In
Cochin, the Sanskrit word *piśāca* is sometimes used to distinguish them from lineage
ghosts. In Kottayam, there is an elaborate cult of certain particularly important
ghosts, which are called *teyyams* (a corruption of the Sanskrit word *deva* 'god').

In Cochin, one or more alien ghosts is sometimes attached to a Nāyar *taravād*, 769
whose members are obliged to arrange for its regular propitiation. The ghost may be 613
that of a person who is known to have died violently, within living memory, on the
taravād's land. Alternatively, when a misfortune occurs in a household, the astrologer 782
may newly discover that the ghost of some such person, long dead, is haunting the
taravād's land. He may order a shrine to be built and propitiations to be made. Shrines [778]

613 to alien ghosts are built in the garden of the *taravād* house. They are propitiated annually or in emergency, usually with a cock sacrifice and an offering of toddy. Such alien
778 ghosts are of a lineage other than that of the hosts and are usually of different caste.
782 If a member of the *taravād* dies violently, his successors take care of his ghost in the course of their ancestral propitiations and do not commonly build a special shrine for it in their garden. They may fear such a ghost more than they fear the ghosts of forebears who died naturally, but they will not speak of this to outsiders. Rather, they are likely to deny to others that violent deaths have taken place in their lineage in the past, particularly if the deceased was a suicide or was executed in punishment for a crime. Such a ghost may however be regarded as a source of misfortunes by a Nāyar household of another lineage or by a household of one of the lower castes, expecially it the deceased died on its land or was in some way connected with it. It is then enshrined as an alien ghost in the garden of this house.

769 Most commonly, an alien ghost housed in a Nāyar garden is that of a former serf
615 of the property group, of one of the "exterior" agricultural laboring castes of Pulayans,
Parayans or Pānans. The legends of such ghosts are nowadays often forgotten, but
566 several Nāyars told me that they are likely to be the ghosts of serfs who died after a
564 quarrel with their masters or who were actually killed by them. The ghost is hostile
782 to the *taravād* as a group and demands regular sacrifices if misfortune is to be averted. It is more hostile and capricious than are lineage ghosts, although it can also afford a certain vague protection to the *taravād* if it is correctly propitiated. Propitiations are made annually by a person of the ghost's own caste, often a Parayan or Pulayan of a family now serving the Nāyar property group. The propitiant's fee and the materials for the offering are provided by the *taravād*.

An alien ghost tends to be angered by persons who walk near its shrine at times other than those of propitiations. Some ghosts are angered only if people approach them round midnight or midday. At night, however, ghosts are able to wander some distance away from their shrines, so that it is possible to approach and offend them without being conscious of trespassing. In case of sickness or misfortune, the astrologer
[787] may diagnose that someone of the *taravād* has unwittingly offended the ghost and may order an emergency offering. After he has made the sacrifice, the low caste
[578] propitiant is likely to become possessed by the ghost and, while in a state of frenzy, to declare its satisfaction or to order further offerings. He may also take the opportunity to voice any grievances harbored by the *taravād's* low caste servants against its *kāranavan*.

A ghost of this kind may occasionally harm someone from outside its hosts' *taravād* who walks on their land at night. It could also harm its low caste propitiant if he failed in the correct performance of the rites. Usually, however, its attacks are confined to its hosts.

The ghost of such a hostile servant is to be distinguished from that of a servant who died heroically and voluntarily in the service of his Nāyar masters. Many Nāyar *taravāds* have legends of faithful serfs who died defending their masters' house during war, saved the lives of women and children, rescued their patrons from accidental death, or committed suicide in grief when a Nāyar patron had been killed. After death the ghosts of these servants are housed along with the *taravād's* lineage ghosts and are honored in ancestral propitiations. Nāyars point out that their heroism even makes the difference of caste irrelevant, for food is offered to them before it is offered

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to lineage ghosts who were junior to them in age. The living of the *taravād* themselves 613
make offerings to them and do them obeisance, whereas the ghosts of hostile serfs are 566
especially polluting and malevolent and can be propitiated only by persons of their 564
own caste.

Even so, the ghost of such a lower caste person who is honored for heroism by 769
the *taravād* of his masters may, if he died violently, be feared as an alien ghost by 613
other *taravāds*. In Kottayam in the eighteenth century, for example, there lived a 566
certain Nāyar village headman who had as his servant a man of the Tiyyar caste of 564
cultivators. During the invasions of Malabar by the Mysorean Muslim general, Tippu 175
Sultan, in the 1780's, the Nāyar's *taravād* was threatened with conquest and forcible 782
conversion to Islam. Having sent the women and children of his house into hiding, the *kāranavan* prayed before his lineage's patron goddess until the Muslims were at his gates. He then persuaded his Tiyyar servant to kill him, being unwilling to face the disgrace of circumcision at the hands of the Muslims. Having slain his master, the servant hid himself in an outhouse of the *taravād*. In the night he went forth and attacked the Muslims single-handed, killing several of them to avenge his master, before he was himself put to death. The ghost of this servant is now propitiated along with the lineage ghosts of his master's *taravād*. It is also, however, propitiated as an alien ghost by several other *taravāds* in the neighborhood.

Occasionally, malevolent alien ghosts are those of Nāyars who died violently, 769
often in expiation of some crime. They may have committed suicide after being 613
outcaste for contravention of religious laws, or in the case of a woman, may have been 684
killed by their matrilineal kinsmen after cohabiting with low caste men. A woman
called Kadangōtt Makkam, also of Kottayam, became a ghost in this way. According [762]
to legend, she was suspected by her sister-in-law of having sexual relations with an
Oilmonger. Her brothers banished her from the *taravād*. She was agonized at the
thought of leaving her children, and drowned them in the *taravād's* well. Her *kāranavan* [682]
and brothers were then obliged to stab her to death—the customary penalty for
fornication outside the caste, and perhaps, also, for murder within the *taravād*. She [842]
became an alien ghost particularly liable to prevent women from bearing children, and is established in the gardens of several local *taravāds*.

Such alien ghosts, although Nāyar, are also propitiated by an officiant of the lower 769
caste. The propitiant is usually from some caste which specializes in exorcism and 564
counter-magic, such as Mannāns (washermen), Kanisans (astrologers, who in any 782
case diagnose the misfortune and advise the propitiation) or Pānans (umbrella-makers, exorcists and agricultural workers). The mode of propitiation is the same as in the case of a low caste ghost.

Finally, an alien ghost is occasionally that of a Brahman who died violently. Brahman ghosts, or Brahmarākṣas, unlike all other ghosts, must be propitiated with vegetarian offerings by a Brahman priest hired for the purpose. But Brahman priests,
unlike low caste officiants, never enter a state of voluntary possession by ghosts.
Religious possession is particularly a low caste institution. It is not practiced by [787]
Brahmans, and when found among Nāyars, it is practiced by young men, women,
and other persons who lack secular power. Brahmans do not need to become possessed by their ghosts and deities, for they have the power to demand whatever offerings and fees they require. Low caste propitiants need the authority of a supernatural agent in order to make demands on their high caste masters.

769 No clear distinction is made between alien ghosts and minor malevolent deities,
776 or demons, which are also sometimes called *pretams* in Cochin. Some demons are found
[782] throughout Malabar. Chief of these is Kuttichāttan, a spirit capable of all kinds of
[564] poltergeist activities. Sometimes, on the advice of an astrologer, a *taravād* privately
sets up a shrine to Kuttichāttan and arranges for his annual propitiation by a low caste
173 person in the same manner as an alien ghost. Often, indeed, local myths of particular
769 Kuttichāttans suggest that they have been derived from alien ghosts, whose legends
776 became fancifully embroidered with miraculous elements. The story of one Kuttichāttan,
in this case enshrined in a Nambūdiri Brahman garden and propitiated by a
782 washerman, will illustrate this process. The god was said to have been born from a
sacrificial fire during ancestral ceremonies in a Brahman house. The Brahman house-owner
brought him up, and when he was adult sent him to graze cattle as a serf.
One day the Brahman's red-horned bull was missing, and the serf admitted that he
had killed and eaten it. The Brahman tied him to the rafters of the cowshed and had
him beaten to the point of death. Afterwards, the serf turned into a Kuttichāttan and
disappeared, but hovered above the Nambūdiri household bringing misfortune
until a shrine was set up for him. Educated Nāyar informants surmised that the spirit
had originally been that of an executed serf, later glorified by his propitiants as Kuttichāttan.
782 Similarly, Kadangōtt Makkam, whose story was related above, is spoken
769 of as a form of Bhagavadi in some *taravāds* where she is propitiated.

I have so far mentioned the kinds of alien ghosts which may be attached to individual
184 *taravāds* in Cochin. In fact, however, cults of spirits and deities of the village are
776 grander and more numerous in Cochin than are those of the *taravād*. This parallels
564 the fact that the Cochin village was traditionally highly centralized as a unit of local
796 government. In this area, the temple of the village goddess Bhagavadi is managed
[794] either by a Nāyar village headman's lineage or collectively by a village community of
commoner Nāyars. Only the Nāyars and castes above them might traditionally
[613] enter the temple, but all castes owed allegiance to the deity and took part in her
annual festival. The lowest castes of former serfs, and some other polluting castes
such as washermen, took part in the festival through the medium of one or more
minor malevolent deities or particularly important local ghosts which occupied small
[753] shrines at a distance from the main temple. Such spirits were thought of as servants
of the goddess, and at her will could "sow the seeds" of smallpox or other misfortunes
in the village. To avert such misfortune not only must the Nāyars and other high
castes propitiate the goddess herself, but the lower castes must also assemble, bringing
imitation bullocks and horses—the vehicles of the deity's demon servants—and make
[787] offerings to these demons. Selected persons from these lower castes became possessed
by the village ghosts or demons and, in masked dances, made oracular pronouncements
both to their own and the higher castes. During the festival, and for several weeks
before it, Nāyar households must also entertain these shamans privately in the courtyards
of their houses and make gifts of grain to them which warded off the demons'
wrath.

769 In Kottayam, the village was traditionally less centralized. Each Nāyar *taravād*
184 was an independent landowning body owing only tenuous allegiance to a chief. Cults
776 of deities and ghosts associated with particular *taravāds* are therefore more prominent
796 than are those of village temples, and it is in the former rather than the latter that
564 ritual cooperation between high and low castes is most prominent. Whereas a Cochin
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taravād may enshrine only one or two alien ghosts particularly associated with it; 184
leaving the majority of local ghosts to be propitiated at the central village temple; 776
a wealthy Nāyar *taravād* in Kottayam builds shrines in its garden for six or eight 796
alien ghosts and finances elaborate propitiations on their behalf. Such spirits are in 564
Kottayam called *teyyams*. As in Cochin, the spirits are often the ghosts of Nāyar or low caste persons who died violent deaths—for example, girls who died violently 613
before marriage, women excommunicated or executed for sexual offences, persons 782
killed by lightning, servants executed by their masters, or warriors who died in battle. Usually, miraculous elements are interwoven into their legends. Sometimes, they become merged with common minor deities such as Vettakkorumagan, Kandhākaranan, or some species of Bhagavadi. In a few cases, they have become associated with some episode from the puranic myths and their human origin is lost sight of. As in the village temple rites of Cochin, these ghosts in Kottayam are propitiated, on behalf of the Nāyar *taravād*, by selected persons from the lower castes. These are chiefly Vannans (washermen) and Malayans (exorcists).[22] Annually, the propitiants assemble in the Nāyar courtyard and recite the myths of origin of their spirits. Later, they make and receive blood sacrifices to the spirits, and finally, while possessed by [787]
them, perform spectacular masked dances and declare the spirits' satisfaction to an assembled company of many castes. These festivals take place throughout the whole of several nights in the month of January to February and draw vast crowds from the surrounding neighborhood.[23]

I have so far dealt with modes of propitiation of, and possession by, alien ghosts. 787
In addition, both in Cochin and Kottyam, Nāyars believe that certain persons can, 754
through appropriate rites and spells, gain private control over alien ghosts and minor 564
deities and engage in witchcraft or sorcery through their power. In what I call witchcraft,[24] the individual uses the power of his patron spirit in order to take the form of a bull, dog, jackal, or other animal. In this form he touches his foe in the night, causing [753]
him to fall ill with fever, to become insane, or even to die. Witches always belong to one of the lowest castes of Parayans, Pulayans, Pānans or (in Kottayam) Malayans. [761]
They usually attack persons of Nāyar or other high caste whom they themselves hate. Occasionally, however, a normal person of any caste, even a Nāyar, may hire a witch to attack a personal enemy.

A sorcerer performs rites and recites spells to an alien ghost or minor deity over which he has control and causes it to pass magically into the body of an enemy, thus bringing about fever, miscarriages in women, insanity or death. Sorcerers can also bring about the deaths of cattle. Nāyars attribute sorcery chiefly to lower caste persons. For whereas the Nāyars predominantly worship Bhagavadi and certain Sanskrit deities, the castes below Nāyars specialize in the propitiation of evil ghosts and minor deities, and it is solely with these lower supernatural beings that witchcraft and sorcery are associated. Washermen, astrologers and umbrellamakers, who specialize in exorcising ghosts from the bodies of patients, are particularly suspected by Nāyars of themselves engaging in sorcery. Nāyars do, however, occasionally suspect Nāyars of other lineages, particularly affines with whom they have quarreled, of practicing sorcery or of hiring low caste witches or sorcerers to attack them.

Witchcraft does not usually require the diagnosis of an astrologer. A Nāyar of nervous disposition simply suspects that a low caste man has bewitched him if he falls ill after encountering an animal in the night. Sorcery is usually diagnosed by an

787 astrologer, who, however, normally leaves his patient to guess which of his enemies
754 has injured him. Public accusations of witchcraft and sorcery are theoretically not
564 permitted, although Nāyars have been known to take the law into their own hands and
inflict beatings on Pānans and Parayans whom they believed to have attacked them
755 through witchcraft. Normally, sickness resulting from possession by a ghost or demon
as a result of witchcraft or sorcery is counteracted by exorcism. Local specialists of
754 the castes of washermen, astrologers or umbrellamakers are hired to attend at the
564 patient's house. There they make sacrifices to patron spirits whom they themselves
787 control. Later, they voluntarily become possessed by these spirits and perform frenzied
dances in hideous masks before the patient, calling upon the alien malevolent spirit
to leave him. The patient usually goes into a hysterical fit, after which the sickness
may subside. Exorcism by masked dancing of this kind is known as *kōlam tullal.*
Any form of rites or spells to control ghosts or minor deities, whether evil or beneficent,
is covered by the general term *mantravādam.*

ANALYSIS

769 The analysis of beliefs and practices centering about alien ghosts involves the
182 following questions: 1) Why are alien ghosts appropriate objects of fear? 2) How do
these fears fit into the general pattern of Nāyar handling of aggression? 3) What
psychic and social functions are fulfilled by the institutions surrounding alien ghosts?
The answers to these questions will relate the alien ghost patterns to the functioning
of the local community and its subgroups, and to the expressive needs of individuals.

769 *Alien ghosts as objects of fear.* Alien ghosts are individuals who suffered unusual or
152 premature death. People expect them to be especially malevolent. This expectation
is based on their presumed envy of the living, and in some instances on the fact that,
182 having found death through violence and hatred, they can be expected to continue
to be violent and hateful. Hence they are appropriate targets of fear.

Alien ghosts are the focus of more violent fears and hatreds than are the ghosts of
matrilineal forebears, for they can be even more capricious and wantonly punitive.
As we have seen, Nāyars do express a limited amount of aggression against lineage
[865] ghosts, and I have suggested that this is because their aggression training is not so
strict as to prevent them from acknowledging to themselves some degree of hostility
toward living matrilineal elders. Their projected aggression toward lineage ghosts,
however, is constrained—like their aggression toward living elders. These ghosts,
although punitive, are more protective than alien ghosts.

Alien ghosts are congenial objects for more violent aggression and fear, precisely
because they *are* alien. They are securely outside the individual's most significant set
[564] of personal relations—those of the lineage. Even Brahmans, whose aggression training
is so severe that they are unable to acknowledge hostility between themselves and
their own ancestral ghosts, express fear and hatred of alien ghosts.

I assume that the fear and hostility which is directed at alien ghosts really has its source elsewhere. My reason for this assumption is that, although the fact that they died unnaturally provides a plausible reason why alien ghosts should be thought of as generally hostile, there is in most cases no ostensible reason in the individual's own personal relationships to alien ghosts which would account for their being chosen as the targets of hatred and fear. Presumably, if we follow psychoanalytic theory, the ultimate sources of these fears lie in familial relationships. This would seem reasonable

in the Nāyar case, for in spite of the institution of lineage ghosts there are serious 769
limitations on the expression of aggression within the matrilineage. It is therefore 152
logical to hypothesize that a residuum of unexpressed aggression is displaced outside 182
the lineage toward outgroups and toward supernatural agents which represent these groups. However, there are also, as we shall see, realistic reasons, issuing from the political and economic structures, why individuals should feel aggressive toward outgroups of various categories. It seems probable that the institutions surrounding alien ghosts absorb some of these aggressions as well.

Alien ghosts in the general context of Nāyar handling of aggression. The role-structure of alien ghost cults is that of the wider community, and to understand them we must see how they are interwoven with political and economic relationships between lineages and between castes. For political and economic factors limit both the form and the direction which the expression of aggression can legitimately take in these various relationships.

Within the lineage, as I have suggested, the Nāyars' aggression training permits 769
them to acknowledge to themselves a certain degree of hostility in their relations 613
with matrilineal kin. It does not, however, permit physical aggression between matrilineal
kin, nor does it permit the expression of projected aggression in the form of 578
accusations of witchcraft or sorcery between matrilineal kin. For the *taravād* is the 182
smallest corporate unit in Nāyar society. Its members are bound by the closest ties 152
of economic cooperation. They must present a united front to the world, and such forms of aggression would be incompatible with the smooth functioning of their group. A degree of aggression can, however, be safely projected outside the *taravād* on to lineage ghosts, whose cult, as we have seen, actually strengthens the solidary bonds between living matrilineal kin.

Turning to wider relationships within the Nāyar caste, we must note that the 152
political organization traditionally permitted the open expression of organized physical 578
aggression against peers outside the lineage, in controlled feuds between lineages 628
of the same village, villages of the same chiefdom, and chiefdoms of the same kingdom,
and in warfare between kingdoms. Such physical aggression within the caste was 613
possible because the internal organization of the caste was segmentary. Conflicts 182
within it therefore balanced each other. Lineages opposed each other within the village but combined against other villages. Villages opposed each other within the chiefdom but combined against other chiefdoms. Chiefdoms opposed each other within the kingdom but combined against other kingdoms in war.

In this system, the most severe limits on intersegment conflict were those on feuds 627
within a village. Such feuds arose in response to grave disputes—often, it appears, 613
involving charges against a Nāyar woman of immorality with a low caste man. But,
particularly in Cochin, these feuds were of short duration. They were controlled and 152
curtailed by the authority of village headman and district chief. Hence interlineage 182
disputes were limited in their mode of expression. Moreover, it was possible for individuals of different lineages to quarrel, yet to be unable to persuade their *kāranavans*
and the rest of their lineages to enter a feud with them. It is here that suspicions of 627
sorcery came into play, chiefly through beliefs in the use of hired sorcerers who controlled 613
alien ghosts. Affines were particularly suspect, for, outside the lineage, affines 152
were the persons with whom one had closest relationships and with whom disputes 754
could most easily arise. If, for example, a *kāranavan* seemed particularly fond of a 182

627 wife, his matrilineal juniors were believed to be especially likely to hire sorcerers to
613 harm her. For they would fear that their *ḳāranavan* might secretly convey to his wife
gifts and cash which belonged to his *taravād*. Yet without their *ḳāranavan's* support
152 they would be unable to enter an open group conflict with the *taravād* of his wife.
754 The belief that affines might practice sorcery, and the existence of ritual remedies
182 against such attacks, therefore provided for the expression of projected aggression against persons of other lineages within the caste. I do not know whether Nāyars did, in fact, hire sorcerers to harm their affines, or merely suspected this of others, but it seems very probable that they did. If so, sorcery also provided a covert mode for the expression of direct aggression outside the lineage too. It must be noticed that although, in the case cited, these hostilities arose as much in the conflict of interests between the *ḳāranavan* and his matrilineal kin as between the *ḳāranavan's* wife and her husband's *taravād*, their institutionalized expression was not allowed to disrupt the *taravād*. For the *ḳāranavan's* matrilineal kin could not practice, and could not be suspected of practicing, sorcery against the *ḳāranavan* himself. Instead, members of the *ḳāranavan's* lineage were believed to move (and probably did move) against his wife's lineage as a group, thus endangering the solidarity of the marriage but indirectly promoting unity within each lineage.

564 Turning to the relations between castes, it is obvious that as endogamous groups
of different rank, occupation and wealth, castes were in many contexts outgroups to
578 each other whose interests were opposed. As landlords and noncultivating tenants,
152 the Brahmans and Nāyars wished to exploit the lower castes for their labor; conversely,
182 the lower castes wished to obtain as much compensation as possible from the higher
754 castes. In these circumstances there was great realistic potential for hostility between castes, quite apart from the fact that the internal unity of each caste probably required the displacement of considerable additional aggression toward outgroups in other castes. Organized physical aggression between castes was, however, not feasible. For castes were economically and politically interdependent and linked by hereditary, interhousehold service ties. The lower castes could not rise up against the higher castes who employed them and held political power, and the higher castes could not wantonly harrass the lower castes on whom they depended for services. Instead, it was in the relations between castes that the institutions of witchcraft and sorcery were most prominent. The general tendency was for the Nāyars to accuse the lower castes of these evils. This is understandable, for the Nāyars with their wealth and authority had particular reason to suspect the lower castes of envy and hidden hatred. This generalized projection of aggression toward the lower castes served to enhance the internal unity of the Nāyar caste. At the same time, the open expression of aggression against particular low caste persons was institutionally controlled. For the astrologer did not customarily name his client's enemy, and even if the Nāyar had his own suspicions, open accusations of witchcraft and sorcery were not permitted.

769 The lower castes were considered peculiarly appropriate propitiants for alien
564 ghosts, and only low caste people could voluntarily undergo possession by them.
787 This suggests that the Nāyar fear of direct attack from an alien ghost, like the fear of
152 witchcraft and sorcery, expressed in a disguised manner the Nāyars' projected aggres-
182 sion against the lower castes. The association between lower castes and alien ghosts
[766] was, for Nāyars, indeed appropriate, for both were ritually polluting. Among Nāyars,
the corpses of persons who die violently or from epidemic are unusually polluting and

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their ghosts unusually dangerous. Instead of being burned by their matrilineal kin, 564
the corpses of these persons are buried hastily by men of the washermen's caste—a 787
caste particularly associated with demon propitiation and voluntary ghost possession. 152
The spirits of these victims become alien ghosts. In their anger they may possess and 182
cause injury to persons of any caste in their community. But only the lower castes
can induce shamanistic possession by them, and it is chiefly (some say only) the lower [766]
castes who can control them to work good or ill. Appropriately, Nāyars believe that
low caste witches perform additional rites connected with highly polluting objects
and places in order to enhance their evil power. Witches, for example, are believed to [754]
procure a magical substance by abstracting the foetus from the body of a pregnant
woman and boiling it in a cremation ground, to the accompaniment of spells to a
favorite ghost or patron demon.

There is, however, a qualitative difference between the Nāyar fear of direct 769
attack from an alien ghost and the fear of witchcraft or sorcery. An element of morality
enters into the former fear, even though alien ghosts are more wanton and capricious 613
than lineage ghosts. Although they are malevolent and hateful, alien ghosts must, 182
like lineage ghosts, be respected and propitiated, and there is a feeling that they have 564
the right to be as they are. When they are associated with regular cults of the *taravād*
and the village, moreover, alien ghosts can also afford some vague measure of protection
from misfortune to those Nāyars who conscientiously arrange for their propitiation.
It follows, therefore, that the alien ghost attached to a *taravād* or a village temple
acts in some measure as a kind of conscience for the Nāyar in his relations with low
caste people. For a Nāyar *taravād* which arranges grand festivals for its alien ghosts,
lavishing gifts on the low caste officiants who propitiate them and represent them as
oracles, is also likely to be a *taravād* which has good relations with its lower caste
servants in all contexts of living. In the case of the Nāyar relation to alien ghosts of [154]
his *taravād* and his village, as in the case of his relation to lineage ghosts, the concept of
reprojection of the superego may therefore be appropriate, as well as that of the
simple projection of aggressive id impulses. For while there seems no doubt that the
Nāyar projects on to alien ghosts some of the aggression which he has toward the lower
castes, just as he projects onto lineage ghosts some of the aggression he feels toward
matrilineal elders, these ghosts act also as stern monitors of his conduct in relationships,
respectively, with the lower castes and with matrilineal kin.

The situation is somewhat different with regard to beliefs in witchcraft and sorcery. 754
It is true that a Nāyar who has recently wronged an untouchable or an affine may be 769
one most likely to suspect untouchables or affines of attacks by sorcery. But he does
not—at least openly—phrase the attack in terms of justifiable retaliation for his own 564
wrongdoing. Instead, he speaks of some anonymous affine or low caste person who,
out of his own envy and wickedness, has used his evil power over a patron ghost in
order to harm an innocent person. Nor does the Nāyar respond to the attacks of witches [782]
and sorcerers by humble propitiation of the possessing demon. Instead he engages a [755]
low caste practitioner of his own to exorcise the demon with the help of a superior
ghostly power. Thus, while both the belief in sorcery and the public cults of alien
ghosts probably reveal, indirectly, the projection of Nāyar aggression against out-
groups, they operate in different social contexts. Witchcraft and sorcery are regarded,
by Nāyars who are the recipients of these attacks, as the evil work of envious persons
against those more successful than themselves. They are seen as covert substitutes for

754 769 564 forms of direct aggression which would be condemned by law. I am uncertain whether low caste people actually practice sorcery, but it seems very probable that they do. If they do, it is also very probable that they regard their actions as forms of retaliation which are morally justifiable, although outside the framework of the law. By contrast, alien ghosts institutionally attached to the *taravād* and the village have the support of all right-minded persons and are more comparable to institutionalized secular authorities. For they are concerned with the overall maintenance of interdependent and harmonious relations between castes of the community, and their cults are a public, collective acknowledgement of the need for these relationships.

564 769 A complete analysis of alien ghost cults would, of course, require full discussion of their role in the lives of the lower castes themselves. I lack space here for such a discussion but will make one or two relevant points. In each of these lower castes there were cults of familial ghosts. These, though less elaborate than the Nāyar cult of lineage ghosts, fulfilled similar intrafamilial functions. Some lower caste households [778] also erected one or more unhewn stones in their gardens which were believed to enshrine male or female alien ghosts or minor deities. These spirits seem to have fulfilled, for the household itself, similar functions to those of the *dharma devī* of a Nāyar *taravād*. They were propitiated by the low caste householder. Nāyars believed that a low caste man could also control such a household spirit, or some personal spirit over which he had gained individual sway, to bring harm on an enemy through sorcery. Lower caste persons certainly believed that some members of their castes possessed these powers, and it seems probable that some persons did try to employ them. Household or personal spirits could also be used by powerful owners to exorcise other harmful spirits from the bodies of high or low caste people suffering from attacks by sorcery.

564 152 754 The Nāyar's relationship to these lower castes was therefore one of secular authority combined with some ability to oppress them in the economic and political spheres. In addition, the Nāyar projected his aggression against them in the belief that they might harm him through witchcraft or sorcery. The lower caste man's relationship to the Nāyar was one of submission. He could not express direct aggression toward the Nāyar. He probably did, however, express aggression toward a Nāyar enemy covertly through sorcery. It is possible that a few low caste persons in addition believed themselves capable, through witchcraft, of assuming the form of an animal and bringing harm to an enemy of higher caste. It must also be mentioned that low caste persons believed others of their caste to be capable of sorcery against themselves. Witchcraft, however, seems to have been confined to relationships between low and high castes.

769 564 782 613 776 152 The lower castes of the village also owed allegiance to the Nāyar goddess Bhagavadi, who was enshrined in Cochin in the village temple, and in Kottayam in small temples attached to particular *taravāds*. The lower castes could, however, approach Bhagavad, only through the propitiation of alien ghosts attached to the *taravād* or the temple. In the context of these propitiations, the lower caste officiant's relationship to his Nāyar hosts was a complex combination of aggression, authority, cooperation, and submission. In the *teyyam* festival of a Nāyar *taravād* in Kottayam, for example, lower caste officiants must first humbly gain permission from the living Nāyar *kāranavan*, the Nāyar lineage ghosts and the *taravād* goddess before starting their own propitiations. In the offerings to the *teyyams* which follow, the officiant's attitude to these minor deities is ostensibly one of humility, although the actual performance of the blood sacrifices permits considerable expenditure of aggression. Later, when the officiant

152

dons his mask and becomes possessed by his *teyyam*, he may adopt an authoritative 764
or aggressive attitude to his Nāyar hosts, demanding gifts or threatening them with
misfortune before conferring his blessing. He may not, of course, physically attack 564
the Nāyars. Indeed, he is, while possessed, likely to solicit admiration by inflicting 782
physical suffering on himself, usually by burning himself with torches or rolling in 613
the red hot ashes of a fire. After the oracular pronouncements, having doffed his mask, [787]
the officiant again becomes the servant of the *taravād* and humbly accepts his fee. [085]
For the low caste officiant, therefore, these festivals permit a limited, stylized expres-
sion of aggression and a temporary assumption of authority toward their high caste
masters. At the same time, the festivals underline both the need for interdependence
between the castes, and ultimately, the lower castes' permanent, secular role as sub-
missive servants.

Functions of the cults of alien ghosts. My discussion of alien ghost institutions in the 769
general context of Nāyar handling of aggression has necessarily pointed to some of
their social and psychic functions. These may, it seems, be summarized as follows. 182
First, the cults permitted, in a harmless manner, the handling of aggression which 152
arose in relations between castes. Second, whether or not witchcraft or sorcery were [754]
actually practiced, the belief that those whom he wrongfully harassed could arm
themselves with these ritual weapons must have acted as a deterrent to the Nāyar [626]
authority who was tempted to oppress low caste subordinates, or to favor his affines
at the expense of his matrilineal juniors. Through witchcraft and sorcery, alien ghosts,
therefore, might help to prevent injustices which could not readily be brought before
a secular authority.

Third, these institutions brought together in ritual cooperation the very categories 769
of persons whose mutual ambivalence provided the ultimate motive force for the 564
institutions themselves. In the case of witchcraft and sorcery, there existed a compli-
cated interplay of hostilities and alliances which, over time, balanced each other. All 182
Nāyars feared the harmful supernatural power of the lower castes, and this gave unity
to their caste. In a particular instance, however, a Nāyar who believed himself attacked
by an individual low caste practitioner, or by another Nāyar with the help of such a
practitioner, could obtain relief only by engaging the ritual assistance of some other
officiant from one of the suspected castes. In the case of the cults of alien ghosts institu- [152]
tionally attached to his *taravād* and his village temple, it seems that the Nāyar's
generalized fear of and hostility to outgroups was turned outside the area of human [154]
relations and focussed upon supernatural agents feared by all. But again, only willing
and friendly ritual cooperation with lower caste officiants could ward off supernatural
attacks from the whole community, including the Nāyars.

It seems probable to me that one of the most important functions of all religious 796
ritual, if not the important, is this resolution of conflict within individuals and within 769
groups. The manner in which this is achieved varies greatly. The rituals of rebellion[24]
and the initiation rites[25] analyzed by Gluckman, for example, on the surface bear little 152
resemblance to Nāyar cults of the dead. But as Gluckman has shown, their broad 182
social functions are the same. Institutionalized religious ritual, like the private rites of
obsessional neurotics, permits to the individual a disguised expression of his aggression,
while at the same time reassuring him that his control over the direct physical expres-
sion of aggression is unimpaired. But institutionalized ritual does far more than this.
It has not only temporary therapeutic value for the individual, but is also interwoven

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769 with social, legal, and economic institutions in such a way that it resolves recurrent
conflicts within them and thus affords them support. For institutionalized ritual
152 draws into cooperation, in common acts and a common belief system, the very cate-
182 gories of persons upon whose mutual ambivalence the rites are founded. More than this, by bringing home to the participants a sense of their common helplessness in face of the dangers and mysteries which confront man both in his own nature and in his world, ritual appears to transmute their very hatred into sentiments of mutual dependence and love.

MODERN CHANGES IN CULTS OF THE DEAD

178 At the present day the cult of lineage ghosts tends to be retained in its traditional
769 form only in the most traditional households—those having residential and economic
613 norms most closely approximating the traditional pattern, and living in the old style of ancestral house. In the new houses built in the past twenty years there is no ancestral shrine, and varying degrees of modification and attrition are observable in ancestral and death rites in these modern types of household.

596 In households comprising an elementary family or a congerie of mixed matrilineal,
cognatic, and affinal kin, the cult of lineage ghosts has died out in its traditional form.
178 In some families emergency propitiations are still made to the ghosts of kinsfolk on
769 the advice of an astrologer. But such a ghost may now be that of any relative who died
782 in the house, and the propitiation may be carried out by any adult male resident.
In one Cochin house, for example, lived an old woman, her elder widowed daughter,
[613] and her children, and her younger daughter, daughter's husband and their children. The old woman's son, who would traditionally have been *kāranavan*, had taken his share of property and gone to live with his wife. When the younger daughter's small girl fell ill with fever, the astrologer advised a propitiation of the ghost of the elder daughter's husband, who had died in this house and been buried near it three years previously. The food offering was made by the child's father in a corner of the living room. In this case neither ghost nor propitiant were members of the *taravād*. Fifty years ago neither one of them could have been concerned in this *taravād's* ancestral rites.

613 In some households, regular collective offerings to lineage ghosts are still made in
178 July and October, but the form of the rites has changed. Cooked rice balls are offered
as in *śrāddham* instead of the old offerings of cooked food. In Cochin in 1952 there
769 was no prohibition of alcohol. But even so, many modern families despised the old
782 offerings of toddy, meat, and arrack and substituted vegetarian food with coconut juice, or else performed the Sanskritic rites. Even in traditional *taravāds* whose members have not yet divided their property, educated *kāranavans* are now often unwilling to perform the old-fashioned rites. Such was the case in one wealthy *taravād* of a Kottayam village headman. The *kāranavan*, a university graduate and a politician, felt that he must maintain the old ceremonies for the sake of his *taravād's* local reputation, but would not perform them himself. Instead he persuaded his younger son to carry out the offerings to the lineage ghosts and the annual cock sacrifice to Bhagavadi. This youth was, of course, of another *taravād*. Traditionally he would not even have been permitted to enter his father's ancestral shrine. In many households there are now no ancestral propitiations, for many now deny to lineage ghosts the power to bless or harm.

Funeral and *śrāddham* rites persist in a fuller form, but these, too, are often curtailed. 178
This is especially the case in *taravāḍs* which have lost their ancestral wealth. Rice 76
balls are sometimes offered only on the two last days of the pollution period. Only [602]
close kin, and not the whole Nāyar community, are invited to the sixteenth day feast. Often no *dīkṣā* is observed at all. Alternatively, twelve sets of *dīkṣā* rites, for the twelve months of the year of mourning, may be performed in succession on the sixteenth day. Often the bones are not taken to a sacred river. If they are taken, it may be believed that the ghost is thenceforth appeased and that no further *śrāddham* or ancestral rites are required.

The role-structure of death rites has also changed. In most households only immediate 178
younger brothers and maternal nephews, or the own children of a deceased 764
woman, take part in the offerings, instead of the whole *taravāḍ* as heretofore. On the
other hand, women, as well as men, now offer rice balls to the ghosts of their parents [596]
or matrilineal elders. This reflects a change in the legal status of women, and the fact [613]
that women are now the legal heads of many recently partitioned households. In
elementary family households, spouses now frequently observe death pollution for [562]
one another. At the same time, each may now even refuse to attend the funerals of
matrilineal kin. Both in Cochin and Kottayam, the son of a man now often replaces [594]
the matrilineal heir as chief mourner, especially if he has inherited his father's property.
Nāyars indeed say that "the rites go with the property." If there are disputes over [578]
the property, sons and nephews may dispute the right to perform the ceremonies,
feeling that their performance gives the chief mourner the right of inheritance. Some [428]
men perform rites for both father and mother's brother; others, for neither, if neither
bequeathed wealth. The beliefs which accompany funeral and *śrāddham* rites have
also suffered attrition. In general, the belief that death rites are performed solely to 178
give rest to the spirit is triumphing over the belief in the necessity to propitiate 76
punitive ghosts. On the other hand, the Nāyars do not dwell on the traditional Brahmanical belief in the tortures of hell which await unpropitiated souls. Many state that they now disbelieve in any form of afterlife. These perform rites only as a mark of respect for and commemoration of the dead. A very few refuse to observe death pollution or to perform funeral rites at all. One educated Nāyar, for example—a medical doctor—stated that on the deaths of his parents he would merely cremate their bodies and invite a few like-minded friends to a meal to commemorate them.

Analysis. Behind these changes lie several separable though related kinds of change in Nāyar social structure and culture. With regard to changes in the cults of dead kinsfolk, the collapse of the *taravāḍ* as a legal and economic corporation is of major importance. With the loss of collective legal responsibility which this entails goes a loss of the sense of collective moral responsibility. Nāyars who are no longer legally responsible for one another, who no longer share land, a common house, and a common destiny, no longer think it probable that their misdemeanors can bring misfortune to each other.

The collapse of the *taravāḍ* is also, of course, accompanied by a total change in the 178
relationships between matrilineal kin. Mother's brothers whose property is divided 613
from that of their nephews no longer have authority over them. Indeed, the mother's
brother is now often absent in his wife's house when a child is growing up and exerts 604
no discipline over him. In any case the change which takes place in matrilineal relationships after a modern division of property is very marked. One man whose *taravāḍ*

178 was still undivided commented to me on this change. "In my *taravād*," he said, "I
613 dare not speak before the *kāranavan* without standing and placing my hand before
604 my mouth. But in K. *taravād*, after their partition, I have seen the nephews sitting to play cards with their uncle and passing the cigarette from their mouth to his. When I saw this I knew that relationship means property, and without property there is no relationship."

178 Moreover, the change to elementary family households does not merely entail
594 a shift of the same disciplinary functions from the mother's brother to the father.
152 Nāyar fathers have a tradition of indulgent tenderness toward their children and are loth to discipline them. Even when they are forced to do so, the techniques of discipline
593 differ from those in a traditional *taravād* house. In the intimate atmosphere of the small elementary family household, traditional etiquette is abandoned. Children
[154] learn to obey both parents from love more than from fear. There appears to be a much deeper repression of aggression than in the traditional setting, and
[769] correspondingly, many young Nāyars cannot entertain the notion that their parents' ghosts could act punitively toward them. It seems probable that such changes in the modes of handling aggression—affected also by the collapse of the military tradition and the modern legal ban on all forms of physical aggression—may also lie behind the repugnance of modern Nāyars for such other traditional religious forms as blood sacrifice and spirit possession.

178 Also important in the abandonment of ghost cults is, however, an increased tendency toward the adoption of Sanskrit rites. This tendency, which has marked all
564 the non-Brahman castes during the past hundred years or so, I would associate with
177 increasing mobility within the caste system and, most recently, with its gradual collapse. For the Nāyars, as for the lower castes, the Brahmans are no longer a group with whom they have fixed status relationships. Instead, the Brahmans are now a reference group whom the Nāyars emulate and with whom they compete in the struggle for high rank and respectability. Some Nāyars who still hold their traditional beliefs in ancestral spirits and deities deliberately "purge" their rites of non-Sanskritic elements in order to gain respectability. Others have changed both rites and beliefs toward a modified form of the Brahmanical religion, even while they are busy repudiating the religious authority of the Brahman. Yet others, whose number is probably
[829] increasing, repudiate both Brahmanical and non-Sanskritic religions in their orthodox forms. Instead, they work out for themselves a more or less agnostic world view with humanitarian ideals, in which ceremonies, if they figure at all, figure only as acts of piety toward respected persons.

178 The cults of alien ghosts are also changing their form and gradually dying out. This change accompanies the gradual collapse of the caste system as a system of ranked
769 occupational groups linked by hereditary service ties. The collapse of the caste system
564 itself results from the growth of the capitalist market economy and the democratization of political institutions. Some Nāyars retain their beliefs in witchcraft and sorcery, but the categories of persons whom they suspect are no longer solely caste
[755] determined. They are as likely to include fellow factory workers or competitors in government service, irrespective of caste. Professional exorcists of appropriate caste are
[782] often no longer available, for many have left their traditional work. So also have many of the low caste families who formerly propitiated ghosts and minor deities associated with village temples or with Nāyar *taravāds*. Since the passing of the Temple Entry

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Act of 1947, moreover, low caste persons in general wish to enter the main court of 769 the temple along with the higher castes and to propitiate the great deity. Alternatively, they build modern temples of their own dedicated to Sanskrit gods. They begin to 564 shun the outer courtyards of temples populated by ghosts and devils and to leave these unpropitiated. Some Nāyars still believe that the lower castes have supernatural powers as sorcerers and lycanthropic witches, but believe that as the lower castes acquire education and "civilization" they voluntarily give up these powers. Others now deny that ghosts, witches, or sorcerers ever possessed powers at all.

All of these changes in belief and ritual are probably linked not only specifically 178 to the collapse of *taravād* and caste as small birth-status groups, but more generally 571 to the widening range of Nāyar social relations and to the relaxing of their former tight interdependencies in face-to-face relationships. As they move into a heterogeneous, mobile, urban setting composed partly of impersonal relationships with strangers, the Nāyars cease to regard the natural order as in all respects a moral order and cease to seek personal motives as the ultimate causes of misfortunes. The growth 178 of scientific knowledge in schools and the spread of medical facilities also obviously influence beliefs about illness. This does not, of course, mean that the Nāyars and lower [154] castes no longer require institutionalized modes of handling their aggressive impulses and their uncertainty in face of cosmic mysteries. In a few areas of living, new religious institutions have developed, which are outside the subject of this paper. In general, however, I think it is true to say that the scope of ritual beliefs and activities is shrinking[27] for Malabaris as a whole, and that as technology develops and new social arrangements become feasible, they concentrate more on the "how" of misfortunes, leaving the "why" to chance. Correspondingly, of course, conflict is increasingly handled [627] through modern secular institutions (the law-court, the trades' union, the political party, the democratic election, etc.), which produce continuing social structural changes rather than serving to maintain harmony within traditional birth-status groups.

NOTES

[1] For a brief analysis of social change among the Nāyars, see E. K. Gough, "Changing Kinship Usages in the Setting of Political and Economic Change Among the Nāyars of Malabar," *Journal Royal Anth. Institute*, LXXXII (1952), 71-88. 113

[2] George P. Murdock, *Social Structure* (New York, 1949), p. 2.

[3] The Madras *Marumakkattayam* Act of 1933, and the Cochin Nāyar Act of 1937.

[4] Before the date of this Act, all division of ancestral property in a Nāyar *taravād* had been stirpital.

[5] For accounts of Nāyar propitiations of lineage ghosts, see E. Thurston, *Castes and Tribes of Southern India* (Madras, 1909), V, 362-3; F. Fawcett, *The Nāyars of Malabar*, Bull. Madras Govt. Museum (Madras, 1901), III, No. 3, 245-253; K. M. Panikkar, "Religion and Magic Among the Nayars," *Man*, XVIII, No. 7 (1918); V. K. Raman Menon, "Ancestor Worship Among the Nayars," *Man*, XX, No. 3 (1920); R. K. Pisharodi, *Ancestor Worship in Kerala* (1923).

[6] Menon, 1920.

[7] M. J. Levy, Jr., *The Family Revolution in Modern China* (Cambridge, 1949), pp. 168-9.

[8] F. Freud, *Totem and Taboo*, trans., Jas. Strachey (New York, 1950), pp. 51-63.

[9] M. Mead, *Male and Female* (New York, 1949), pp. 297-304.

[10] M. E. Opler, "An Interpretation of Ambivalence in Two American Indian Tribes," *Journal of Social Psych.*, VII (1936), 82-115.

[11] A. Kardiner and Associates, *The Psychological Frontiers of Society* (New York, 1945), pp. 112, 118ff, 167; M. Fortes, *The Web of Kinship Among the Tallensi* (Oxford, 1949), p. 234ff;

113 G. Roheim, *Psychoanalysis and Anthropology* (New York, 1950), pp. 134, 135, 432; F. L. K. Hsu, *Under the Ancestors' Shadow* (New York, 1948), pp. 240-243; Mead, 1949, pp. 40-41; J. W. M. Whiting and I. L. Child, *Child Training and Personality* (New Haven, 1953), pp. 263-304.

[12] Nāyar *Kāranavans* are of course not ancestors in the strict sense. However, I use this term for convenience as they fulfill roles similar to those of ancestors in many patrilineal societies.

[13] For an account of Īrava social organization and culture, see A. Aiyappan, *Iravas and Culture Change*, Bull. Madras Govt. Mus., 5 (1945).

[14] M. N. Srinivas, *Religion and Society Among the Coorgs* (Oxford, 1952), pp. 158-165.

[15] For a brief account of Tamil Brahman kinship, see E. K. Gough, "Brahman Kinship in a Tamil Village," *American Anthropologist*, XVIII, (1956), 826-853.

[16] See, e.g., Thurston, V (1909), 152-240.

[17] Fortes, 1949, p. 235.

[18] H. E. J. Stanley, trans., Duarte Barbosa, *A Description of the Coasts of East Africa and Malabar in the Beginning of the Sixteenth Century* (Hakluyt, 1886), p. 15.

[19] R. Rowlandson, trans., Sheikh Zein-ud-deen, *Tohfut ul Mujahideen*. An Offering to Warriors Who Shall Fight in Defence of Religion Against Infidels (Hakluyt, 1883), p. 63.

[20] A. C. Burnell, trans., *The Voyage of John Hughyen Van Linschoten to the East Indies* (From the Old English Translation of 1598) (Hakluyt, 1885), p. 284. 600

[764] [21] All castes on the southwest coast bury or cremate the dead in the southwest corner of the ancestral garden. This custom contrasts with that of Hindus in the eastern districts, who burn or bury the dead on communal sites, each owned jointly by a caste community, outside the residential area of the village.

[566] [22] The castes of agricultural serfs are absent in Kottayam, agricultural labor being done by Īrava tenants or by the Nāyars themselves.

[23] This form of propitiation of alien ghosts in Kottayam is called a *teyyam tira*. It closely resembles the *kāranava tērē* of the neighboring Coorgs (Srinivas, 1952, pp. 158-165.) In Coorg, however, lower caste officiants impersonate the Coorg *taravād's* own ancestors. In Malabar, lower caste propitiants impersonate only alien ghosts attached to the Nāyar *taravād*.

[113] [24] Witchcraft (*odi*), a witch (*odiyan*). For a more detailed account of witchcraft, see Thurston, VI (1909), 36-41, 122-127.

[25] M. Gluckman, *Rituals of Rebellion in South-East Africa* (Manchester, 1954).

[26] Gluckman, *The Role of the Sexes in Wiko Circumcision Ceremonies. Social Structure*, M. Fortes, ed. (Oxford, 1949), pp. 145-167.

[114] [642] [27] All of these statements apply to conditions in 1947-9. I observed no major changes in ritual activities during a brief revisit in 1952. The Malabar Coast, as the newly formed State of Kerala, elected a Communist government in April 1957, and I have little information on conditions after that date.

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116 **TEXTS--a full set of pages from each processed source, arranged in page order, as a means of establishing the context for any particular slip. Sets are arranged in the numerical order of the sources. See also:**

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SNAKE WORSHIP AMONG THE NAYARS OF SOUTH INDIA

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NO species of animal has impressed mankind to the same extent as the snake apparently has. Startling indeed is its power of sudden appearance and disappearance; and its gliding motion, without appendages, gives it an eerie quality. The lightning suddenness of its bite and the tragic consequences, coupled with its amazing swiftness, place the snake in a category of its own. Above all its habit of casting off its skin periodically endows it with a supposed immortality which becomes the cause of its extreme veneration. Snake worship is very widespread in the world and is attended by varying rites and ceremonies. In India, where many species of snakes abound, the cult is very widespread. Perhaps due to [114] the variety of species and the consequent danger and damage involved, snake worship in India may have had a local origin, though J. Tod traces its origin to a Central Asian tribe called Tak.[1]

It is significant that in the very rude and low cultures, among tribes like the Veddahs and Andamanese, and to some extent among the Australians, snake worship is not found. The Australians do have totemic clans named after snakes, but no special veneration is paid to snakes as such. In West Africa, on the other hand, among the Dahomey tribe the monster python Dahu Sio is worshipped as a great god, and is propitiated for favourable weather, for oracles and for wealth. Even in the Palaeolithic period snakes were held in esteem, judging from the carved snake figures on the batons de commandment, and also during Mesolithic period as evinced by snake paintings on the painted pebbles of Mas-d-Azil.

E. W. Hopkins observes that in the Vedic Age snake worship was widely prevalent in India, and references are made

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to Abibuduya, the serpent of the deep. Further, an inscrip- 825
tion at Banavasi in Kanara in South India, records the erection 171
of a cobra stone in the middle of the 1st century A.D.

In Chamba district the 'golden snake' is offered milk.[2] In Bengal the snake goddess Manasa is worshipped widely, and this is supposed to give protection from snake-bite. Manasa is represented by an earthen pot with vermilion marks. Among the Meithies of Manipur the snake is believed to be the manifestation of a dead ancestor and is accordingly venerated and worshipped. A cult of the snake god is found among the Khasis of Assam, which however is diminishing now-a-days. Among the Khasis a mythical snake called U Thlen is worshipped and is propitiated by the offering of human blood.[3] It is believed that the Thlen attaches itself to homes and families and is the bestower of wealth, prosperity, fame and well-being to its hosts. However, it needs regular and periodic propitiation by the offering of human blood, and in the event of its being neglected it brings disease, ill luck and ruin to the unlucky family which has angered it.

In South India and particularly among the Nayars the 825
worship of snakes is an established cult. Snake groves or 778
kavus, which are clumps of wild trees festooned with
creepers, abound in plenty, usually near the homes of Malayali 171
Hindus. These groves are called *vishathum kavu* (poison shrine) or *nagakotta* (snake shrine). Usually a block of granite is carved into the shape of a cobra's head, called *chitra kutta kalu* and is consecrated at the spot.

In Quilon district, Travancore, near Haripad is a big snake 825
worship centre in the form of the Manarsalil temple. One of 171
the important snake shrines is called *bernic kavu* situated in Chenganur taluk of the Quilon district. In Trivandrum is the great temple of Padmanabha Swami and here one of the important deities worshipped is Ananta, the mighty serpent, upon whose great coils Lord Vishnu reclines on the ocean of milk.[4] Further, in Tirunelveli a temple dedicted to Shankar and the goodess Gomiti called Sankaranianar Koil has a snake mound where worship is offered to serpents in the hope that chronic stomach ailments will be cured by propitiating the

825
171 deity. Besides these, there are innumerable private snake shrines, particularly in pious households.

753 All diseases or misfortunes are due to the neglect of snakes.
825 Leprosy, itches, sterility of women and deaths due to poison,
171 are attributed to the anger of snake gods. The remedy for
782 snake-bite lies in the propitiation of serpents through worship
778 at the snake shrine. If no such shrine exists, then a diligent
search is made and a 'snake stone' is dug up from the vicinity. Thereafter this accidental find of the snake stone is duly consecrated and worshipped, and all the erstwhile troubles are attributed to the inadvertent neglect of the sacred stone. The person
[766] dying of snake-bite is taboo, because his body is supposed to be occupied thereafter by the snake god, and it needs to be disposed of in a special manner with particular reverence and specific rituals.

771 Among the Nayars of South India snake worship assumes
825 unique importance. It is popularly believed that in early times a
778 Pambakattu Nambutiri brahmin brought the serpents with him
796 and left them in their present abode. He however promised to
[173] return one day but never did. Strangely enough, in Travancore, a Pambakattu Nambutiri family still resides and is not permitted to enter the Manarsalil temple for fear that the snakes might leave the area and follow the brahmin to his abode. In a special ceremony called *kavu muttam* or the shifting of the snake shrines from one place to another in the compound of the house—if accidentally the shrine is awkwardly situated in a plot of land where construction is to begin—the Pambakattu Nambutiri is called specially to do the necessary shifting ceremony. He purifies the new area and transfers the shrine to the newly consecrated spot, to the accompaniment of sacred incantations. Thereafter there is feasting and the brahmin is paid money and is presented with a set of new clothes. This is in striking coincidence with the legend of origin, and lends credence to the story of the origin of snake worship, particularly in Manarsalil temple in Quilon, as being connected with Pambakattu Nambutiri brahmins.

778 The plans of snake shrines have much in common, though some are small and some big. The Manarsalil temple

is surrounded by a series of concentric circles as it were, on 778 the outside is a wide road where fairs are held and much commerce goes on on festive days. The low castes cannot [564] go beyond this outer fringe. Lodged within, is the garden 778 where the snakes are to be seen in their natural habitat. In this 825 area is a sacred tank, the water of which is rather dirty due to falling vegetation, but which is reputed to be medicinal in property. Here too is a very large vessel into which milk is poured by the priest so that the snakes might be well fed. Within this belt of vegetation and bushes is the shrine itself. There is a verandah with a central hall called *mandapa* with an open space in front, and in the centre is the platform where the snake deities are enshrined. There are two images here, one of Nag Raj with five heads and the other of a serpent with only one head. This is the inner sanctuary where only the priest enters. In Manarsalil temple a virgin priestess conducts the most sacred rites and is considered to be the guardian of the serpents.

A similar position pertains among the Meitheis [171] of Manipur, where a priestess looks after the serpent god called Pak-hangba.[8] Near the verandah is a sacred well from [782] which water is drawn as offering to the deities and is afterwards distributed to the devotees as holy water. It is believed that only pious people can see the snakes in the forest and the wicked cannot. The devotee considers himself blessed if he is able to catch a glimpse of the snake while on his way to the temple.

The common private snake shrine in Travancore lies within 825 the compound of the house, often near the boundary, and away 778 from the main building, in order to best preserve its sanctity 351] and to avoid accidental pollution by inadvertent trespass by 771 some members of the family. The abode of the snake god is called *sarpa kavu*, and this is usually a raised patch of land surrounded by bushes and trees. In the foliage there must be a [824] plant yielding milky sap and in the absence of such a plant, one is planted near the shrine. The trees near the shrine are never cut and the area in the vicinity of the *sarpa kavu* is kept very clean. 825 Often granite images of many-headed snakes with spreading 778
771

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Nayar

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778 hoods are placed in the shrine, and no insect or rat or other
771 animal is killed in the consecrated spot. Even broken bits of snake images are worshipped and they are set up in a row. No image or snake-stone is permitted to fall down, as that is considered to be inauspicious. On the inner surface of the hood of the snake is carved a seated female figure.

825 These sacred snakes are supposed to be different from the
771 ordinary serpents. They are given the status of benign family
776 deities and are presumed to possess strange powers and the attribute of gods. They are revered and they deign to live only under ceremonially pure conditions and surroundings, accepting only vegetarian offerings and abhorring animal
[782] sacrifice. In contrast mention may be made of the Thlen of the Khasis which demands human blood as offering. In the event
825 however of their abode being polluted, e. g., by a menstruating
783 woman, the serpents are angered, and unless propitiated may
782 cause disease or harm to the offender. The sacred serpent
776 called *sarpam* is supposed to be small, about 6 to 18 inches
[841] in length and is golden in colour. It is highly poisonous but ordinarily does not do any harm. If properly propitiated it guards the family and brings good luck and prosperity;
[153] but if neglected, insulted, or otherwise uncared for, it causes skin disease, leprosy or loss of sight. Such a punishment is visited on the offender or on his near relatives. As a
[784] consequence certain taboos are attached to the shrines and no
[841] menstruating or pregnant woman may come within six yards
[343] of the shrine, nor should anyone enter it without taking a bath.

776 The actual worship or *puja* is conducted either once or
782 twice a year. The priest cooks rice in milk and adds pieces of ripe plantain to it, with a few flowering heads of the sacred *tulsi* plant dropped in towards the end. The offering is cooked on a special oven near the *sarpa kavu* in a bell-metal vessel. Thereafter, the priest pours some water over the snake idols to ceremonially bathe them and places a bunch of areca-nut palm in efflorescence on the head of the image in a diagonal fashion. The idol is then anointed with turmeric powder and basil leaves and flower petals are

showered on it, and it is often garlanded. Incantations and 796 782
mantras are recited by the priest during the ceremony.

Bell-metal oil lamps are lit in front of the images and their [354]
number is usually 3, 5 or 7. In each lamp there are 5 to 7 [801]
wicks pointing in different directions. Only coco-nut oil or *ghee* is used in these ceremonial lamps. In front of these lamps are placed three banana leaves with the cut end of the leaf facing the image and the tip pointing away from it, facing north or east. On one of the leaves some uncooked rice is placed and a husked coco-nut is kept over it, while in the other leaf unhusked paddy is heaped with a coco-nut placed on it. The eyes of the coco-nut are away from the snake idol and are towards the tip of the banana leaf. On the third leaf are placed a few small bananas of a special variety called *kadali*, because *kadali* is referred to in the Vedas.

The boiled rice offering is then placed near the shrine and some money is offered to the idol by dropping it in the oil of the lamp. These preparations are offered to the snake god who is supposed to partake of them. Thereafter the *prasad* or the offering is distributed among the members of the family,
and the priest gets half of it. The *prasad* must not be eaten [825]
by a crow or dog as this is a bad omen. After the worship, the [787]
contents of the leaves are given to the priest who therefore takes great pains to see that this particular ceremony is well conducted.

782
Once a month or once every three months, low caste Hindus 796
called Pulluvans visit the houses which have snake shrines. 564
Usually they come on Tuesdays or Fridays, and they sing songs [533]
in praise of the snake gods. This is done in a rather crude [534]
manner to the accompaniment of crude single-stringed instruments called *veena kunju*. For this invocation, an oil lamp is lit before the shrine, and the above-mentioned three banana leaves and their respective contents are placed before the image of the serpent. Usually a woman accompanies the male singer and joins in the chorus, playing the while upon a crude drum. After the praise has been adequately rendered, the ceremony is brought to a close and the musician gets his share of money and materials. This ceremony is meant to propitiate and

782

796 please the serpent god and to flatter him so that he may bear
[564] the welfare of the host in mind, and guard the family against
disease, misfortune and harm accruing from human or supernatural agencies.

There are three important ceremonies in connection with serpent worship called ***sarpa yaga***, ***sarpa tulal*** and ***sarpa preeti***. They are conducted either at home or in the temple, usually on Sundays, since it is held that the serpents are most powerful and lenient on that day and are in a benign mood for granting favours.

[791] ***Sarpa preeti*** is conducted in the house whenever misfortune occurs. The astrologer is consulted who decrees that a curse is upon the house and the serpents are angry. Thereupon elaborate worship is conducted with much ritual, and propitiation of the angered deities is effected and normalcy returns.

796 ***Sarpa tulal*** is a form of divine cure of the afflicted. The
unfortunate victims of leprosy, mental or other diseases
755 gather to worship the serpent gods praying for a cure. The priest conducts the worship and the afflicted go into a trance-like state and dance in religious fervour. Thereafter the priest throws consecrated turmeric powder on their heads and faces. The devotee feels blessed and cures are believed to occur.

796 ***Sarpa yaga*** is an annual festival in which many families jointly contribute to hold the ceremony. It is held usually for the collective prosperity of the village and lasts for two or three days. The afflicted and diseased persons dance in a trance for a long time and are given coco-nut water by the priest. At the end of the ***puja*** the priest sprinkles turmeric powder over the heads of the devotees and pours out holy water thrice in the palm of their hands.

825 One of the special attributes of snakes is their power
753 over disease. The snake deities are specifically impor-
776 tuned for the prevention of skin diseases, stomach disorders,
mental disturbances and for sterility. Leucoderma and
leprosy are specially regarded as due to the curse of snakes
who might have been angered by some unwitting disrespect
shown towards them, or by accidental misdemeanour
600 on the part of the inadvertant devotee. Of particular impor-

of particular impor- 842
tance is the ritual conducted in the case of barren women who 755
seek divine intercession of the serpent gods. The afflicted 782
couple come on a Sunday morning to the snake temple 776
after a purificatory bath and after putting on new garments. They request the priest to conduct a propitiatory *puja* and offer flour to the deity. Thereafter, a bronze plate on which the name of the person is carved is placed inverted at a spot. After a year when they have been blessed with a child, they repair to the temple once more to offer thanks for the boon granted. The child is helped to lift the bronze plate and under it a small serpent is observed signifying that all is well. In the event of there being no snake underneath, [763]
it is taken as a bad omen predicting the death of the child. If even after ten years no child is born to the couple, the unretrieved bronze plate is discarded, on the presumption that the deity has not seen fit to grant the wishes of the devotees.

There is also a class of pious people who have through their 755
devotion to, and worship of, the snake deity, acquired the art of 759
curing victims of snake-bite. They are called *sarpa vaidyas* and cases of snake-bite are brought to them for treatment. The man chants certain magical formulae and tears a betel leaf in front of a pot of milk. The serpent is supposed to come out of hiding and to withdraw the venom, thus effecting a gradual cure.

But modern trends are contrariwise, and a gradual decline 178
is discernible in the ritual of snake worship in a large majority 771
of households which have snake shrines. Less emphasis is paid to the traditional worship of the serpent, and what little propitiation is done is more or less symbolic. Makeshift arrangements are often made, and worship by proxy is offered by the priest, in the absence of the family members, who merely pay a fixed sum to the priest for his labours, and thereby absolve themselves of the guilt of neglecting the snake gods.

Apart from simplification of the ritual of snake worship, [778]
yet another symptom of the decay of the cult appears to be the reduced importance that is given to the upkeep of the existing snake shrines. Many erstwhile sacred shrines are in a dilapidated condition. Perhaps in future, snake worship itself might become a thing of the past.

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[5] Hodson : *The Meitheis*, 110.

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116 TEXTS--a full set of pages from each processed source, arranged in page order, as a means of establishing the context for any particular slip. Sets are arranged in the numerical order of the sources. See also:

Literary texts 539

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Bulletin, Vol. III, No. 3

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ANTHROPOLOGY.

NÂYARS OF MALABAR

(WITH ELEVEN PLATES)

BY

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PREFATORY NOTE.

For the benefit of those who have not seen the |21| first article of this series of notes on some of the people of Malabar, I wish to repeat that it is an "attempt to describe the people as they actually are, and not as they are supposed to be in the books on Hinduism, which, for the most part, tell us of *Hinduism as it is not* in Southern India. Books |27 have not been consulted or used anywhere, except where the fact has been notified." It is a product |14 of original work during three years and a half spent |01 in Malabar. My thanks are offered to the many 000 gentlemen, natives of Malabar, who have in the kindest manner helped me—Mr. M. Krishnan (Malayalam Translator to Government), Messrs. O. Vasava Menon, C. P. Raman Menon, U. Balakrishnan Nâyar, M. Raman Menon, T. K. Gopal Panniker, T. Kannan, Achutan Nâyar, and many others. Also I have to thank Mr. Badcock of Tellicherry for assistance. The proofs have been [128] through the hands of several Nâyars, and every precaution has been taken to ensure accuracy of facts.

[1901.] F. FAWCETT.

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THE NÂYARS OF MALABAR.*

IT is likely that some of the gentle readers of this 660 monograph are not familiar with "The Lusiad," the epic poem of Luis de Camoens, the restless soldier-poet who sailed with a detachment of the Portuguese for the West Coast of India in 1553. Voltaire, who is not given to redundant praise of anybody, styles him the Portuguese Virgil. At any rate he has written a fine epic, and from it I will quote a few lines concerning the Nâyars, with whom he came in personal contact three and-a-half centuries ago.

> "Polias the labouring lower clans are named;
> "By the proud *Nayres* the noble rank is claimed;
> "The toils of culture and of art they scorn,
> "The warrior's plumes their haughty brows adorn;
> "The shining faulchion brandish'd in the right,
> "Their left arm wields the target in the fight;
> "Of danger scornful, ever armed they stand
> "Around the king, a stern barbarian band." †

A former Governor of Bombay, Johnathan Duncan 701 564 by name, who visited Malabar in 1792-3, has anticipated me in quoting some of these lines, and with regard to them he observes: "These lines . . . . . contain a good description of a Nâyar, who walks along, holding up his naked sword with the same kind of unconcern as travellers in other countries carry in their hands a cane or walking staff. I have observed others of them have [411] it fastened to their back, the hilt being stuck in their waist band, and the blade rising up and glittering between their shoulders." ‡

The Nâyars, the Nareæ of Pilny, (Nat. Hist. VI, 21), were the swordsmen, the military caste of the west coast of India. There are some small sects or castes intervening, but broadly speaking the Nâyars rank after the Nambûtiris in Malabar, and they occupy the same position in the Native States of Cochin and Travancore.

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* The first article of this series was in Bulletin, Vol. III, No. I, where the Nambûtiri Brahmans of Malabar were described.

† Mickle's Translation, London, 1798.

‡ Logan's "Manual of Malabar," page 137.

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564 According to the Census Report, 1891, they numbered 377,828 in Malabar. The figures found in this useful document offer an instance of the unreliability of casual observation. The author of "A Manual of Malabar Law" describes the peoples of Malabar to some extent, and in his Introduction says: "The Nâyars constitute the major portion of the Malabar population." One hears of Malabar as the land of the Nâyars, as if its inhabitants were all Nâyars. Certainly they may be said to form the most distinguishing feature of the district; but, when we seek in the spirit of accuracy, we find the surprising fact that they number but 14·2 per cent. of its population.

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564 The chief immediate interest attached to them lies in the fact of their being the best, that is the fullest, the most complete existing example of matriarchy, or, to be more strictly accurate, of inheritance through females. [171] This system, obtaining at one time amongst the Celts and other races of Europe, was probably universal in the sense that it existed at some period in the life history of every race of mankind, and is now to be found here and there in the world.

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171 That inheritance through females was once the rule in Southern India is fairly obvious. Amongst others the Maravars, who are, so far as we can surmise at present, aborigines in the sense that we know of no earlier inhabitants in the part of the peninsula occupied by them, to this day offer strong proof of this. I refer to the 102 genuine Maravars—the Kondayan Kottai Maravars of Tinnevelly—and not to the offshoots settled in Trichinopoly and elsewhere, who have almost entirely forsaken all the customs of their fathers.* Amongst the Maravars the girl on marriage joins the sept of her husband, but she retains her own sept name, and her children are of *her* sept; not of their father's. Marriage between persons of the same sept name is prohibited; and this is regulated solely through the mothers. The tribe is endogamous; but the septs within it are exogamous. Thus, a man or a girl cannot marry any one of the same sept, having the same sept name (which is inherited through their mother), and *must* marry some one within the tribe but of a different sept to his or her own—of his father's sept or any other. Though property

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* Most of the cigar makers of Trichinopoly are Maravars in origin. Their names —— ————Naidu,————Pillay, and so on are borrowed from people of higher castes.

devolves through the men, the degrees between which 000
marriage is prohibitive are inherited through the women.*

But the circumstance that inheritance through women 101
was once, perhaps, the rule in Southern India cannot be 174
accepted as of itself proof that the Nâyars are identical
with the Dravidians, as the people of Southern India are [611]
commonly called. It is not yet time to say whether they [171]
are or are not. To the ordinary visitor their outward appearance, customs, habitations, mode of life generally, are very different from what he sees in the Telugu or Tamil countries; for Malabar, "the west coast," is as unlike the rest of the Presidency as Burma. The only other district of the Madras Presidency which resembles Malabar, is Ganjám, more particularly the northern part of it, where the people are almost entirely Aryan. The resemblance between these, the Uriyas of Gumsoor and thereabouts, a fine fighting stock, and the Nâyars of Malabar is very striking. It is not, perhaps, a mere coincidence that in these two furthest remote corners of the Presidency alone, the people at large are to be seen wearing umbrella hats to protect them from the sun.

The Nâyars are divided into clans, (we will call them 564
clans for want of a better term), many of which intermingle through marriage, but some of them are endogamous. The precise number of these clans cannot be given, as it is disputed whether certain of them have a right to belong to the cognate Nâyar body. The names of the clans which have come directly under my measuring instruments are these:—

Kiriyattil.
Sûdra.
Kurup.
Nambiyâr.
Úrâli.
Nalliôden.
Viyyûr.
Akattu Chârna.
Purattu Chârna.
Vattakkâd.
Vangilôth.
Kitâvu.
Pallichan.
Muppathinâyiran.
Vîyâpâri or Râvâri.
Attikkurissi.
Mânavallan.
Vengôlan.
Adungâdi.
Adiôdi.
Âmayengolam.

This list is not in order of priority.

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* An example of this custom existing in another land may be quoted here from a modern book—'The Caroline Islands,' by F. W. Christian, 1899: "Descent is traced through the mother—a custom tolerably common amongst the Oceanic races in general. Members of the same tipu or clan cannot marry." (Page 74.)

564 The Kurup, Nambiyâr, Viyyûr, Mânavallan, Vengôlan, Nelliôden, Adungâdi, Kitâvu, Adiôdi, Âmayengolam, all superior clans, belong, properly speaking, to North Malabar. The Kiriyattil, or Kiriyam, said to be derived from the Sanskrit graham, a house (a doubtful derivation) is the highest of all the clans in South Malabar, and is supposed to comprise or correspond with the group of clans just named of North Malabar. In the old days every Nâyar chief had his Chârnavar, or adherents. The Purattu Chârna are the *outside* adherents, or the fighters, and so on, and the Akattu Chârna are *inside* adherents—clerks and domestics. The clan from which the former were drawn is superior to the latter. The Ûrâli are said to have been masons; the Pallichans, mancheel* bearers.†

The Vattakkâd clan, whose proper métier is producing
gingelly or cocoanut oil with the oil mill, is the lowest
of all excepting, I think, the Pallichan. Indeed, in North
Malabar, I have frequently been told by Nâyars of the
superior clans that they do not admit the Vattakkâd to
be Nâyars, and say they have adopted the honorific affix
"Nâyar" to their names quite recently. It seems rather
[141] odd that this clan, or at any rate one sub-clan of it is
almost the tallest and has the finest nasal index, being
the only clan whose nasal index is finer than that of the
Nambûtiri.

564 Union by marriage, or whatever the function may be
called, is permissible between most of the other clans,
582 the rule which was noticed already under "Nambûtiris"‡
by which a woman may never unite herself with her
inferior, being always observed. That is, she may unite
564 herself with a man of her own clan or with a man of any
superior clan, or with a Nambûtiri, an Embrântiri or
any other Brâhman, or with one of the small sects coming
between the Brâhmans and the Nâyars, but she cannot
under any circumstances unite herself with a man of a
[264] clan which is inferior to hers. Nor can she eat with
others of a clan inferior to hers. A man may, and does
[851] without restriction. Her children, by an equal in race
[613] and not only in mere social standing, but never by one

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[493] * A mancheel is a conveyance carried on men's shoulders, more like a hammock *slung* on a pole, with a flat covering over it, than a palankeen. The palankeen is unknown in Malabar.

† There is in the Cochin state a clan, Elâyadan, which is practically equal in status to the Nambûtiri.

‡ Madras Government Museum Bulletin, Vol. III, No. 1.

who is racially inferior, belong to *her* Taravâd. The 564
children of the inferior mothers are never brought into 851
the Taravâd of the superior fathers. That is, they are
never brought into it to *belong* to it. But they may live 613
there. And where they do so, they cannot enter the
Taravâd kitchen or touch the women while they are
eating. Nor are they allowed to touch their father's
corpse. They may live in the Taravâd, under these and
other disabilities, but they are never *of* it.

It will be as well to avoid here a possible error that 564
may have arisen from the statement that most of the 582
clans may intermingle. Those of the same clan name
may marry. The Nâyars of North Malabar are held to
be superior all along the line, clan for clan, to those
of South Malabar, which is divided from the north by the
river Korapuzha, 7 miles north of Calicut; so that a
woman of North Malabar would not unite herself to a
man of her own clan name of South Malabar. There
will be more to say on the point when we come to
"Marriage." A Nâyar woman of North Malabar cannot 564
pass northward beyond the frontier; she cannot pass the 784
hills to the eastward; and she cannot cross the Korapuzha
to the south. It is tabu. To the west is the sea. The 562
women of South Malabar are similarly confined by *custom*, 178
breach of which involves forfeiture of caste. To this 486
rule there is what appears to be an exception, and this
exception is now having some slight effect, since of late
years the world has come in touch with the Malayâli
who now-a-days goes to the University, studies medicine
and law in the Presidency town or even in far off
England. It is that women of the relatively inferior
Akattu Chârna clan are not under quite the same restrictions
as regards residence as are those of most of the
other clans; so in these days of free communications
when Malayâlis travel and frequently reside far from
their own country, they often prefer to select wives from
this Akatta Chârna clan. This may have some effect on
the status of the clan.

But the old order changeth everywhere, and now-a-days Malayâlis who are in the Government service and obliged to reside far away from Malabar, and a few who have taken up their abode in the Presidency town, have wrenched themselves free of the bonds of custom, and taken with them their wives who are of clans other than the Akatta Chârna. But this is more new fangled than orthodox. The interdiction to travel, and the possible exception to it in the case of the Akattu Chârna women,

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784 has been explained to me in this way. The Nâyar
woman observes pollution for three days during menstruation.
562 While in her period she may not eat or drink
178 with any other member of the Taravâd, and at the end
of it, that is on the fourth day, she must be purified.
783 Purification is known as "mâttu" (change), and it is
effected by the washerwoman who, in some parts of South
841 Malabar, is of the *Mannan* or Vannan caste (whose *métier*
564 it is to wash for the Nâyars and Nambûtiris), but who is,
613 as a rule, the washerwoman of the Tîyan caste, giving
486 her, after her bath, *one of her own* clean cloths to wear
(which is called mattu, change of raiment) instead of the
soiled cloth which she takes away to wash. Pollution,
which may come through a death in the family, through
child birth, or menstruation *must* be removed by "mâttu."
There is no avoiding it.* Until it is done, and it *must* be
done on the fourth day, the woman is out of caste. It must
be done in the right way at the right moment under pain
of the most unpleasant social consequences. How that
the influential rural local magnate wreaks vengeance on
a Taravâd by preventing the right person giving "mâttu"
to the women is well known in Malabar. He could not
with all the sections of the Penal Code at his disposal
inflict deeper injury. Now the Nâyar woman is said to
feel compelled to remain in Malabar, or within her own
part of it, in order to be within reach of "mâttu." My
informant here tells me that the Vannan caste being
peculiar to Malabar, the Nâyar women cannot go where
these are not to be found; and that "mâttu" must be
done by one of that caste. But this is not the rule. I
know from my own observation in the most truly conservative
localities, in Kurumbranâd for instance, where the
Nâyar has a relative superiority, that the washerman is
as a rule a Tîyan; and I cannot but think that the interdiction
has other roots than those involved in "mâttu."
[123] It does not account for the superstition against crossing
water which has its counterparts elsewhere in the world.
As bearing on this point I may mention that the Nâyar
women living to the east of Calicut cannot cross the
river-backwater and come into the town.

564 The Zamorin is the over-lord of the Akattu Chârna
178 clan, and with the decline of his power and influence, it
may be that the women of it have latterly taken more
562 liberty than was formerly possible.

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* More will be said on this point when we come to describe the Tîyans.

The Sûdra clan, one of the best, supplies the women servants in the Nambûtiris' houses. 564* [357]

We will now pass to a consideration of the physical measures of some of the clans—men, not women unfortunately. It was impossible to measure the women. 141 564*

Here are given the averages of the various measures of 186 Nâyars— [114]

25	Kiriattil.	25	Vattakkâd.
25	Úrâli.	25	Purattu Chârna.
8	Kurup.	25	Akattu Chârna.
22	Nambiyâr.	25	Sûdra.

Note.—Group A, a non-descript group of a few individuals of eight different clans (see "Nambûtiris"—Bulletin, Vol. III, No. I, page 10) is not included here for obvious reasons.

Each index given is the mean of the indices—

	Average of 186 Nâyars.
Stature	165·6
Height, sitting	84·9
Do. kneeling	122·4
Span	175·1
Chest	80·6
Shoulders	40·0
Left cubit	46·2
Left hand, length	18·5
Do. width	8·3
Left middle finger	11·0
Hips	26·0
Left foot, length	25·4
Do. width	8·8
Cephalic length	19·2
Do. width	14·1
Do. index	73·1
Bigoniac	10·4
Bizygomatic	13·1
Maxillo-zygomatic index	80·1
Nasal height	4·8
Do. width	3·6
Do. index	76·8
Vertex to tragus	13·1
Do. to chin	19·7
Middle finger to patella	10·1

The physical characteristics of each clan separately will be given first. This table will enable us to see at a glance how the measures of any particular clan differ

* 141 564 from those of the average Nâyar ; also how the averages compare with the Nambûtiri.

But, before doing this, we will exclude the endogamous * 141 564 128 clans—the Ùrâli (wholly endogamous) and the Vattakkâd (partly endogamous), and take the averages of all the others. It will be observed that exclusion of these two, who are each units apart from each other, and the first from all the others here dealt with, leaves the averages of all those who intermingle much the same as before, when the Ùrâli and Vattakkâd were included. It cannot be said that exclusion of these two bring the measures of the others any nearer to those of the Nambûtiri, whose blood is in constant process of mixture with the others, but not at all with the Úrâli and not much with the Vattakkâd. It must, however, be remembered that there are about 39 Nâyars to every Nambûtiri in Malabar, and that the latter does not waive his opportunities to disperse his favours amongst the Nâyar ladies.

* 141 564 The Úrâli and the Vattakkâd are not the only clans wholly or partly endogamous, but they are the only clans wholly or partly endogamous which have been examined thoroughly by me. The Attikkurissi clan is also endogamous, and there may be others.

625 *Note.*—Individuals in the constabulary are excluded from all the tables, their measures being as a matter of course above the averages for their caste or clan.

	Averages of 136 Nâyars, Vattakkâd and Úrâli excluded.
Stature	165·7
Height, sitting	85·1
Do. kneeling	122·7
Span	175·3
Chest	80·4
Shoulders	40·0
Left cubit	46·2
Left hand, length	18·6
Do. width	8·0
Left middle finger...	10·9
Hips	25·9
Left foot, length	25·5
Do. width	8·8
Cephalic length	19·3
Do. width	14·1
Do. index	72·9

	Average of 141 136 Nâyars, 564* Vattakkâd and Ûrâli excluded.
Bigoniac	10·4
Bizygomatic	13·0
Maxillo-zygomatic index	80·0
Nasal height	4·8
Do. width	3·7
Do. index	77·6
Vertex to tragus	13·1
Do. to chin	19·7
Middle finger to patella	10·0

KIRIATTIL NÂYARS.

Ages ranging between 22 and 52.	Maximum.	Minimum.	Average of 25.	To stature = 100.	Remarks.
Stature, height ...	175·2	155 1	165·3	...	
Height, sitting ...	89·7	80·4	84·3	51·0	
Do. kneeling ...	129·5	113·8	122·0	73·8	
Span	186·0	160·4	174·3	105·4	
Chest	87·6	75·0	78·2	47·3	
Shoulders	42·8	37·7	39·4	23·8	
Left cubit	47·8	42·7	45·9	27·8	
Left hand, length ...	19·5	16·6	18·3	11·1	
Do. width ...	8·6	7·6	8·2	44·3	To left hand, length = 100.
Left middle finger ...	11·5	9·1	10·7	57·8	To left hand, length = 100.
Hips	27·9	24·4	26·0	15·7	
Left foot, length ...	26·8	23·2	25·3	15·3	
Do. width ...	9·8	8·0	8·8	13·9	
Cephalic length ...	20·1	17·5	19·0	11·5	
Do. width ...	14·6	13·3	13·9	...	
Do. index ...	80·0	69·0	73·1	...	
Bigoniac	11·3	9·1	10·4	...	
Bizygomatic ...	14·1	12·2	13·0	...	
Maxillo-zygomatic index.	84·8	73·4	80·1	...	
Nasal height ...	5·1	4·2	4·7	...	There are 8 whose nasal height is 5 and over.
Do. width	4·4	3·2	3·7	...	
Do. index	102·3	66·7	78·8	...	
Vertex to tragus ...	14·4	12·0	12·9	7·8	
Do. to chin ...	20·8	17·5	19·2	11·6	
Middle finger to patella.	14·7	5·5	9·7	5·86	

*141 *564 *Face.*—Supraciliary arches prominent in two. Face of one distinctly pyramidal; in two others it was rather so.

In one the broadest part of the head was immediately behind the ears, low down.

Figure.—Fifteen are noted slight, four as slight to medium, five as medium. Two were marked as powerfully built.

142 302 *564 *Hair.*—An oval patch of hair on the vertex remains; the rest of the head, the face and body are always shaved. A moustache is never worn. The men are always clean shaven except during mourning for a near relative, when the razor is not used for a year. The hair on the vertex is allowed to grow long, and well treated with oil, looks glossy and black, is tied in a knot which hangs over the forehead or to one side of the head at the pleasure of the wearer. As a rule the hair on the head is plentiful and wavy, while in a few it is very thick. About 20 per cent. of those examined had scanty hair on the head. The following facts were recorded:—

*142 *564 A man of 50 had a few gray hairs.

A man of 49 had hair distinctly gray: on the face, white when sprouting.

A man of 52 had a few white hairs on the sternum; not on the head.

Baldness is uncommon; and, though old age does not overtake them too early, it has been noted that one man of 40 looked about 60.

[302] Gingelly oil is commonly used for the hair, but its use for the hair is said by some to have certain effects on the body. One man said he used cocoanut oil because, if he used the other, he would get boils all over his body [827] and suffer from headaches. It is usual to oil the head profusely during the month Karkadagam * "in order to cool the body."

Hair on the chest and arms.—As a rule the growth is slight to very slight in 14 out of 25, while in the remaining 11 it is moderate.

On the legs.—In 20 per cent. it was slight; in the rest moderate or thick.

*[564] [302] [305] *Note.*—**Men never shave themselves. With the exception of the oval patch on the crown of the head, about 7½ inches long and 5½ inches wide where the hair is allowed to grow long, all hair on the head, face, chest, abdomen, armpits, wrists and about the pubes is shaved by the barber. The back is not shaved, nor the legs: the arms sometimes, but not always. A few do not shave the chest.**

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* **During the rains.**

302 564* [412] [177] [305]

Nâyar women of all classes shave the hair about the vagina. They shave themselves, standing, placing one foot on a bench or anything a couple of feet or so from the ground, thus raising the leg. The use of scissors for this purpose is rare, new fangled and not sanctified by custom. In a few houses now-a-days razors of English or German manufacture are kept for the use of the women; but according to general custom the barber woman pays periodical visits, and the women of the house receive from her a razor, with which they shave themselves. The armpits, the eyebrows and stray hairs on any other part of the body, excepting of course the head, are shaved by the barber woman. I have it an excellent authority that some of the elderly women—possibly those who are old and fleshy—submit their entire person to the barber woman's razor. The young women never.

In the Tamil country the women, as is well known, use a depilatory. Possibly the Nâyar women resort to shaving in order to avoid the unpleasant odour of the depilatory. The reason for shaving or destroying the hair on that part of the body is not apparent. No reason is assigned for it. Very likely the custom arose out of necessities for cleanliness, when the Nâyars were not the clean people they are now, and like all customs has persisted aimlessly.

142 564*

Colour of the skin.—Using Broca's colour tables. The darkest was as No. 43 (one only); the fairest, 44 to 30. Two others were fair or very nearly so. The colour number for 5 was 37; for 5 was 28; for 13 was 29, and lighter. Darker than the Nambûtiri. The women, who are not so much exposed to the sun, are distinctly fair as well as well favoured. Many are very handsome.

Colour of the eyes.—Out of 20 individuals (using Broca's colour tables for the eyes), in 13 the number corresponding to their eyes was 2, while in 7 it was 1 to a little lighter. So that the eye is, as a rule, brown; rarely black.

301 564* [304]

Ornaments, men.—Not much jewellery is worn. One or two golden earrings called kadukkans are worn, as a rule, in each ear by those who can afford to do so. Some of the members of this clan who call themselves "Paḍinâyirattil"—"one of 10,000"—doubtless a relic of the old Nâyar military system, pierce the ears, but never wear earrings. The title of the hereditary chief of these is Ayyâyira Prabhu Karttâvu. The 10,000 do not, however, all belong to this clan. I came across a man of the Nambiyâr clan who belonged to it, and he too could not wear earrings. Rings and amulets are also worn commonly.

One individual wore 2 golden earrings, of the pattern called kadukkan in each ear.

[789] [515]

One individual wore two rings made of an amalgam of gold and copper, called "tambâk" in the vernacular, on the ring finger of the right hand, for good luck. "Tambâk" rings are lucky rings. It is a good thing to

+ 564 301 [515] [789] wash the face with the hand on which is a "tambâk" ring. I see in my notes a record of an individual who wore one of these rings on the second finger of the left hand. They are common.

One individual wore two rings of the pattern called triloham (lit: metals) on the ring finger of each hand. Each of these rings was made during an eclipse!

[782] One individual wore a silver bangle as a vow. It was to be given up at the next festival to be held at a place called Kottiôre, a famous festival in North Malabar, the scene of it being far away in the forest under the hills. He also wore a "tambâk" ring on the ring finger of the right hand for luck; and a thin iron ring on the ring finger of the left hand.

[304] One individual wore no jewellery, but there was a small circular tattooed spot in the centre of the forehead over the glabella. Tattooing is not common. This individual is the only one of those examined who was tattooed.

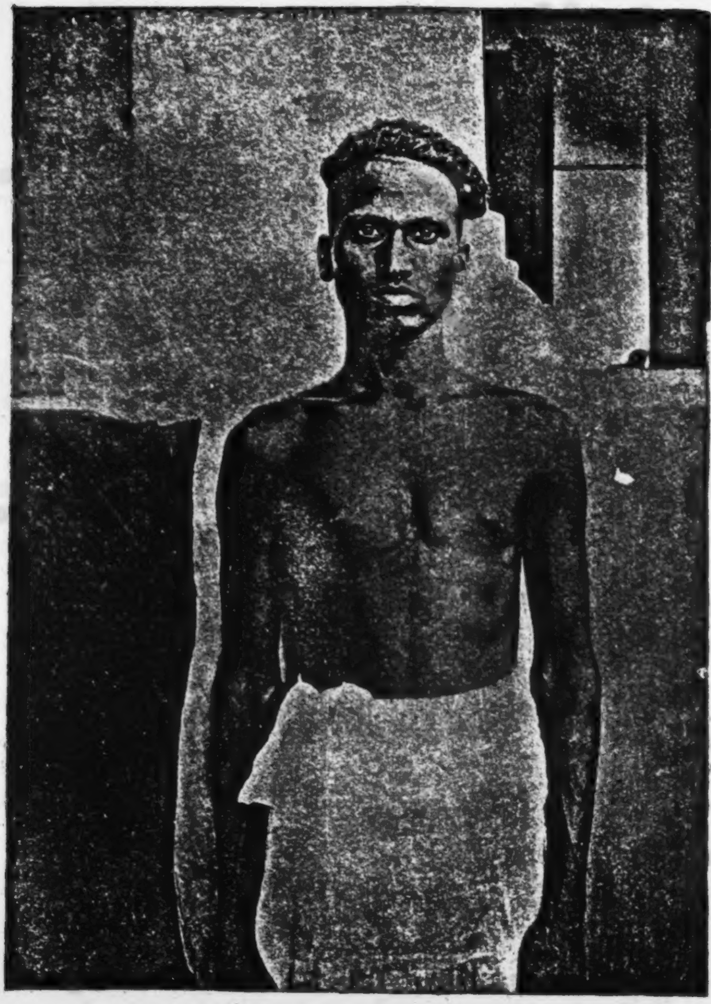
[171] *Women.*—The style of the jewellery worn by the women will be seen in the *plate.*[1] It is altogether unlike any other South Indian jewellery. The necklaces are almost identical in form, shape and general character with those of Sindh. Silver is never worn.

[304] 301 177 +564 The lobes of the ears are dilated in childhood generally in the sixth month and in them are worn large spiral rings of white metal or the more solid "tôda," really a handsome ornament, in the groove of which the elongated ear-lobe is almost concealed. It is made of gold. Properly speaking the tôda is an ornament worn exclusively by the Nâyar women. Several necklaces are often worn at the same time. The Venetian sequin, which probably first found its way hither in the days of Vasco da Gama and Albuquerque, is one of those coins which, having found favour with a people, is used persistently in ornamentation long after it has passed out of currency; thus illustrating the well-known thesis that things originally made for use, by and by pass into ornament. There are instances of this use of coins in Europe, of course, as amongst the Swabian peasantry. So fond are the Malayalis—those of Malabar, Cochin and Travancore—of the sequin that to this day there is quite a large trade in imitations of the coin for purposes of ornament. Such is the persistence of its use that the trade extends to brass and even copper imitations of the sequin. The former, brought from Europe, are often seen to bear the

[1] [see plate I, facing p. 220 -- An.]

6:Fawcett G-5 (ca. 1900)1915
AW11 Kerala AW11
Nayar

PL. VII.



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302
291
564*

AKATTU CHARNA NAYAR. FATHER A NAMBUTIRI.

[Facing P. 196]

legend "made in Austria." The Nâyars wear none but 301
the gold, "mounted" as they call it (the mounting being 177
much as the upper portion of one section of the necklace, 564*
in the plate), strung together through the mounting just as the necklace: a very effective ornament for the neck. The brass imitations of the sequin are worn by the women of the inferior races of whom we shall have some description hereafter. If one asks the ordinary Malayali, say a Nâyar, what persons are represented on the sequin, one gets for answer that they are Rama and Sita; between them a cocoanut tree!

Turkish coins, French half louis, and German 10 mark pieces are also used in the same way, each one being known by a distinctive vernacular name, and no corruption of its nomenclature in European coinage, so that it is always easy to identify one of these coins by its vernacular name. For instance, every Malayali knows what an "Amâda" is: it is what we know to be a real or imitation Venetian sequin.* The half louis of the empire is known as the "pakshikkas," probably from the eagle on the reverse. And so on.†

Ornaments are never worn on the ankles or on the 564*
waist, as is the rule in other parts of Southern India. 301

Dress, men.—This is very simple; ordinarily one cloth 291
round the loins, the ends overlapping a foot or two in
front. It is not tucked between the legs, which is the 564*
fashion practically all over India, but hangs straight to the ground. It should touch the ground, or very nearly do so. Wearing a cloth in such fashion carries with it dignity to the wearer. A Tīyan, or a man of any inferior

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* I have never heard any explanation of the word Amâda in Malabar. The following comes from Tinnevelly: "Amâda was the consort of Bhagavati and he suddenly appeared one day before a Shânár (the caste devoted to climbing the palms and drawing off the juice) and demanded
food. The Shânár said he was a poor man with nothing to offer but toddy, [773]
which however he gave in a palmyra leaf. Amâda drank the toddy and performing a mantram over the leaf it turned into gold coins which bore on one side the pictures of Amâda, the Shânár and the tree; and these he gave the Shânár on a reward for his willingness to assist him. This explains the two names—Shânár caste (as they are called in Tinnevelly, but where they are not very common), and Amâda."

† It is scarcely right to say any of these coins, even the sequin, is not
current. The value of each is known everywhere to a nicety. It must be [436]
remembered that throughout Malabar copper coins of the English and Dutch East India Companies, of Mysore, and of almost every former dynasty of South India are to be found amongst the coins actually current with the people, while in the rural parts reckoning is always in fanams: not in annas.

291
564 caste, is not supposed to wear his cloth below his knees. Now-a-days, when there is a general levelling up, the inferior races occupying a position they never held before, when people speak of caste as if it were a fanciful arrangement of the social fabric which it would be an excellent thing to destroy, forgetting that, fundamentally, it rests on racial differentiation, we see those of castes inferior to the Nâyar wearing their cloths to the ground—in the towns that is, where the sway of modern officialdom and education is felt. But, were a man of inferior caste to wear his cloth to the ground, away out in the district where the old order has not changed much, he would soon be made to repent having done what is believed to be an infringement of the privileges of the Nâyar. He would probably be well beaten, and might have his house burnt. The single cloth (mundu) constitutes the ordinary dress. No turban is worn. It is wrong for a [293] Nâyar to cover his head. But he may use an umbrella, and invariably does so when walking in the sun, for he is very susceptible to its rays. The cloth must be fastened at the waist in a certain way. Those of every caste tie or fasten their cloth round the loins in a certain way; people of no two castes tie the cloth alike.

Women.—A short cloth is worn somewhat tight round the loins, and over it is worn another cloth from the waist to below the knee. Nothing is worn above waist. When one sees women of the Nâyar caste on the roads (they are *never* to be seen in the towns), or at the festivals or other large gatherings, they are wearing a cloth loosely covering the upper portion of the body. In Malabar, where there is prevalent the idea that no respectable woman covers her breast, there has crept in lately, chiefly amongst those who have travelled, a feeling of shame in respect of this custom of dress. Dress is, of course, a conventional affair, and it will be matter for regret should false ideas of shame supplant those of natural dignity such as one sees expressed in the carriage and bearing of the well-bred Nâyar lady.

121 It will be most convenient to deal with the Nâyars as a body under such heads as marriage, customs, etc. Here we are concerned mainly with physical measures and general appearance, under which come dress and ornament. What has been said about dress may be taken as descriptive of all the clans. Before leaving the Kiriattil Nâyars it will be well to note the names of some of those actually measured.

*[291
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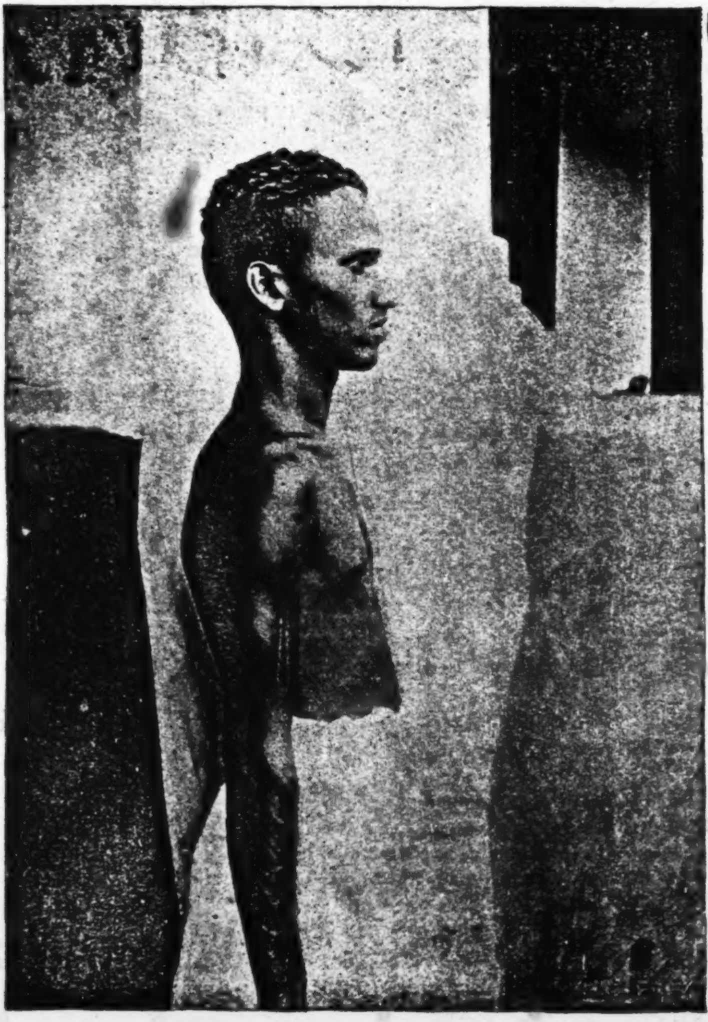
115]

6:Fawcett G-5 (ca. 1900)1915

AW11 Kerala AW11

Nayar

PL. VIII.



142
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564#

AKATTU CHARNA NAYAR. FATHER A NAMBUTIRI.

[Facing P. 198]

564*
551

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Nâyar is affixed as an honorific after the name. Thus 613 one whose name is Gôvindan is called Gôvindan Nâyar. [553]

Taravâd name.	Name.	Occupation.	Age
Manjôli	Gôvindan	Domestic servant ...	30
Kêdôth	Karunâkaran ...	Milk seller	34
Chuliotkolodi	Ithapu	Cultivator	32
Puliakôth	Kêlu	Do.	27
Kurunthal	Narrâinan	Do.	35
Kazhaparambath ...	Shankaren	Do.	32
Etalakandiel	Kêlu	Servant	22
Thanikât	Cherukutti	Do.	25
Thattatath	Chekkunni	Peon	35
Nambidivittil	Kunhunni	Cultivator	50
Nadaviladatha	Chandukutti ..	Do.	25
Tuthenvittil	Vêlu	Writer	24
Thekakamukal	Râmuni	Cultivator	22
Kulangarathathil ...	Kannan	Do.	37
Kizhukalangot	Gôvindan	Do.	25
Pitôli	Râmuni	Do.	36
Puliakôth	Kôman	Do.	25
Edakapura	Rârappan	Peon	46

There seems to be a distinct or specific name for every 553 garden, every acre of land in Malabar, whether in the 552 forest or cultivated, whether enclosed or not. We shall hear of this again when we come to speak of the jungle people, some of whom change their name, their *house* or Taravâd name, as they change their residence from one place to another, always calling themselves after the land on which they are at the time living. Others again cling to the name which is that of the land whence the family has sprung, so to speak.

That the Taravâd name of the Nâyar is that of the 613 land is tolerably evident. Contrary to the rule in 552 Southern India there is, in Malabar, absolute proprietorship of land; and the land, the family house built on it, the land wherein lie the ashes of the ancestors, and the family itself are all included in the meaning of the word Taravâd.

ÚRÂLI NÂYARS: ENDOGAMOUS.

141
564*

Ages ranging between 20 and 45.	Maximum.	Minimum.	Averages of 25.	To stature = 100.	Remarks
Stature	180·8	152·2	163·1	...	
Height, sitting	89·9	79·1	84·2	51·6	
Do. kneeling ...	135·3	113·3	• 120·8	74·0	• 120·75
Span	193·0	161·7	171·3	105·0	

ÚRÂLI NÂYARS—*cont.*

141
*564

Ages ranging between 20 and 45.	Maximum.	Minimum.	Averages of 25.	To stature = 100.	Remarks.
Chest	88·0	77·4	81·2	49·8	
Shouldars	43·7	36·8	39·7	24·3	
Left cubit	51·4	41·6	45·2	27·7	
Left hand length	20·5	17·0	17·8	10·9	
Do. width	8·8	7·5	7.9	...	
Left middle finger	12·2	9·6	10·7	...	
Hips	29·6	23·7	26·0	15·9	
Left foot length	28·3	23·7	24·7	15·1	
Do. width	9·8	8·2	8·7	...	
Cephalic length	20·4	17·5	19·2	11·8	
Do. width	15·0	13·4	14·0	..	
Do. index	79·0	68·2	72·9	...	
Bigoniac	11·1	10·0	10·5	...	
Bizygomatic	13·7	12·2	13·2	...	
Maxillo-zygomatic index.	84·8	74·1	80·6	...	
Nasal height	* 5·3	4·1	4·8	2·94	* There were 6 of 5·0 and over.
Do. width	4·0	3·2	3·6	...	
Do. index	84·4	65·4	75·5	...	
Vertex to tragus	14·2	11·9	12·9	7·9	
Do. to chin	21·2	18·4	19·9	12·2	
Middle finger to patella	18·7	7·1	11·5	7·05	

Face.—Among the descriptive notes of individuals made when measuring them are these:—

(1) Supraciliary arches, slight. Nasal notch. Chin recedes slightly. Chin square with slight hollow in front.

(2) Nasal bone slightly raised. Nasal notch moderate. Supraciliary arches ditto. Chin pointed.

(3) Head pyramidal. Thick flabby nose. Nasal bone slightly raised.

(4) Forehead moderately high and straight. Supraciliary arches slight. Nasal notch. Nose straight; very slight prognathism. Chin recedes.

(5) Forehead high. Supraciliary arches marked. Lips thick. Nasal notch. Nasal bone slightly raised. Ears small.

(6) Protuberance over the right ear. Forehead markedly prominent. No nasal notch.

As a rule the nose is straight, or the nasal bone is slightly raised. In some cases the nasal notch is deep.

In one individual the broadest part of the head was just *above* the ear.

In another, the alæ of the nose appear to have become enlarged through taking snuff. 141 564*

In another, the point of the ear (noticed by Darwin) in the helix ⅓ from the top, was very marked.

One individual of 29 looked at least 40. He had suffered severely from small-pox. [145]

Figure.—The average is slight to medium. One is noted as stout, and another as very strongly built.

Hair.—It has been noticed already (see Nambûtiris. Bulletin, Vol. III, No. I) that the growth of hair on the cheeks is a racial characteristic. In some of the lower races it is entirely absent, while in the Nambûtiris it is constant. About half the Urâli Nâyars examined had a regular growth of hair on the cheeks. 142 564*

On the head.—In all but one the hair on the head, invariably black and glossy, was thick and wavy; in a few, it was very thick or fairly so; and, in the case of three individuals, it was noted as curly. A few grey hairs were noticed in four individuals aged respectively 25, 29, 30, 45; and one young fellow of 20 had a small patch of white hair over the right eyebrow.

Hair on the chest was slight to moderate as a rule, but in 4 individuals it was thick.

Hair on the arms was observed to be slight in 13, and moderate or thick in 12.

In all, the hair on the legs varied between moderate and thick, excepting that in 2 the growth was very thick. One man had shaved his feet, and another had shaved the backs of his hand and his wrists. In a few there was a tolerably thick growth of hair in the small of the back. This is common to all the Nâyars.

Colour of the skin.—In 22 cases in which this was recorded the darkest was No. 43 (Broca's colour types) and the fairest No. 40. Twelve individuals were of No. 29 or fairer, and this (a little fairer than 29) seems to be about the average. A little darker than the Kiriattil.

Colour of the eyes.—8 individuals were of No. 2 (Broca); 6 individuals were of No. 1; 6 individuals between 1 and 2.

Ornaments.—A few of those examined said that men of the clan never wore earrings, though their ears were pierced. There may be some section of the clan who do not; but, as a rule, earrings are worn by those who can afford them. One man indeed said he never wore them, fearing thieves might steal them. Another wore 301 564*

301 *564 silver earrings called kalluvechcha kadukkan which means an earring set with stone (pushyarâgam—topaz).

(1) Three plain golden rings on ring finger of left hand, the same on the little finger of the same hand, and a thin iron ring on the ring finger of the right hand.

[302] (2) Sandal paste patch over glabella; four stripes of the same on chest; three vertical stripes on each upper arm.

(3) Three golden earrings—the usual kadukkans—[789] in each ear. An amulet in a silver cylindrical case worn on the waist. Inside the case is a charm written on a copper leaf. It is to protect its wearer against the influences of the evil eye.

(4) One tambâk, one plain gold ring on ring finger of the right hand.

[304] (5) Ears pierced. Wears no earrings as he has no money. A dab of sandal paste over the glabella, another over the sternum, and on each shoulder.

163 *564 *Prolificness.*—The clan being endogamous, it will be well to note here the number of children born in 16 families of those examined. In all there were born 44 male and 35 female children; altogether 79. This gives an average of 4·9 in each family; and of those there were living at the time an average of 4·6 for each family. A figure which is above the average for the Nâyars as a body, be it noted.

141 It is perhaps scarcely worth noting that the average weight of four men was 119 lb.

Names of some of those examinad.

613 *564 463 551 115

Taravâd.	Name.	Occupation.	Age.
Mêlapalli	Kêlu Nâyar	Cooly	22
Kanjôli	Râman Nâyar	Writer	22
Kurundottathil	Krishnan Nâyar	Do.	20
Puthukûdi	Achutan Nâyar	Trade	22
Ponmilli	Krishnan Nâyar	Do.	45
Kuttakil	Râman Nâyar	Cooly	32
Payarvîtil	Aiyappen Nâyar	Mason	36
Pûvakunial	Châthu Nâyar	Cultivator	26
Kalathil	Shangaran Nâyar	Cooly	25
Korolath	Shangunni Nâyar	Do.	22
Pallithotathil	Gôpalan Nâyar	Nothing	22
Kûtakkil	Râman Nâyar	Cooly	30
Thondil	Appa Nâyar	Writer	20

551 Thondi or Thundi was, I think, mentioned by one of the ancient geographers as a port near where this last man lived. This man, therefore, bears the name of the place as it was, probably, in the days of Ptolemy.

VATTAKKÂD NÂYARS.

There is some obscurity in the sub-divisions of this 564* clan. To the north of Calicut, in Kurumbranâd, they are divided into the Undiâtuna, or "those who pull" (to work the oil machine by hand) and the "Muri-Vechchu-â tune," or "those who tie or fasten bullocks" (to work the oil machine by means of bullocks and not by hand); yet farther north, Tellicherry and thereabouts there are no known sub-divisions; while in Ernâd, to the eastward, these names are quite unknown, and the clan is divided into the "Veluttâtu," the White, and the "Karuttâtu," the Black. It has been remarked already (page 82) that the Vattakkâd (those who turn round) are not always admitted to be true Nâyars. In the extreme north of Malabar they are called Vaniyan—oil monger. The "White" have nothing to do with expression and preparation of oil, which is the hereditary occupation of the Black. The "White" may eat with Nâyars of any clan; [264] the Black can eat with no others outside their own clan. The Black sub-clan is strictly endogamous. The other, the superior sub-clan, is not. Their woman may marry with men of any other clan, the Pallichchan excepted. But not *vice versâ*. The men must marry within their own sub-clan. I think, but am not sure a man of this clan may marry a woman of the Pallichchan clan; but even if such an alliance is permissible anywhere, I do not think it ever takes place. It may be taken as accurate that men of the clan always marry within their own sub-clan, and that women of the superior sub-clan very often mate with Nâyars of superior clans.

In taking the measures I made no distinction between 128 the sub-clans; it was only just before completion that 141 the existence of the sub-clans was discovered. Had the 564* important fact been discovered earlier, the sub-clans would have been separated. Though scarcely enough for scientific accuracy, it is tolerably certain that most, if not all, of those examined were of the superior sub-clan, which is exogamous as regards the women. The inferior section of the clan—the Black—is not to be found north of the Korapuzha river in North Malabar. One quarter of my subjects were measured in North Malabar—Cannanore, Tellicherry, Badagara; and for the rest, in some cases it is noted that the individuals are of the superior section. This accounts pretty correctly for rather more than half. I am tolerably certain that the other half also belonged to it.

124
*564 However alert one's discrimination may be, one may fall into possible error as I did here. "What caste do you belong to?" "I am a Nâyar." "What kind of Nâyar?" "I am a Nâyar." It may take some time to let in comprehension that the name of his clan is wanted, then the answer is "I am a good Nâyar" (one of a good or superior clan). At last he will say he is a Sûdra Nâyar, a Kiriyattil or whatever he may be. Again, many claim the Kiriyattil as their clan when they really have no right to do so, being inferior to it.

141
*564

Ages ranging between 20 and 62.	Maximum.	Minimum.	Averages of 25.	To stature = 100.
Stature	178·6	154·3	167·0	...
Height, sitting	92·0	78·7	84·6	50·6
Do. kneeling	131·3	112·4	122·9	73·6
Span	190·0	164·7	177·8	106·5
Chest	95·8	70·6	81·3	48·7
Shoulders	42·8	36·9	40·3	24·1
Left cubit	51·4	44·3	46·9	28·1
Left hand, length	20·5	17·0	18·7	11·2
Do. width	8·9	7·6	8·2	...
Do. middle finger	12·6	10·4	11·9	...
Hips	27·8	23·6	26·3	15·7
Left foot length	28·1	23·6	25·7	15·4
Do. width	9·8	7·9	8·9	...
Cephalic length	20·1	18·2	19·2	11·5
Do. width	15·0	13·2	14·2	...
Do. index	79·0	68·0	74·0	...
Bigoniac	11·2	9·7	10·5	...
Bizygomatic	14·0	12·3	13·1	...
Maxillo-zygomatic index	84·4	77·0	80·1	...
Nasal height	5·3	4·0	4·9	2·93
Do. width	3·9	3·0	3·5	...
Do. index	87·5	61·2	73·1	...
Vertex to tragus	13·9	12·3	13·1	7·8
Do. to chin	21·5	17·3	19·8	11·9
Middle finger to patella	14·5	1·8	9·4	5·62

The individual, whose mid finger when standing at "attention" to the top of his patella gives the maximum measure, had a span which was 23·4 more than his height. In seven, the length of the left foot was greater than the breadth of the hips across the crests of the ilium. In ten, the nasal length was 5 cm. and over.

The statures of the first ten measured averaged 168·2 and the nasal index 76·6; otherwise the correspondence between the averages of 10 and of 25 is complete. Perhaps mixture of subjects belonging to the two sections of the clan is responsible for the rather important differences noted. 141 564 *

Face.—Nasal notch is noted as deep in 3 and moderate in 1; in the others it was slight or not apparent. The nasal bone was raised above the line of the nose in 5, and depressed in 2. The following are brief notes of individuals:—

(1) Deep nasal notch. Forehead high. Supraciliary arches very slight. Chin long.

(2) Forehead high. Nasal point slightly raised. Nasal notch moderate.

(3) Nasal point depressed so that the nose has as it were a knob at the tip.

(4) Supraciliary arches not apparent to the touch. Slightly rounded nostrils. Teeth project forwards.

(5) Deep nasal notch. Supraciliary arches marked.

The posterior portion of the head of the individual whose nasal index was the minimum seemed to project uncommonly; but his cephalic length was no more than 19·4 or a little above the average.

Figure.—Two-thirds are noted as "slight," nearly one-third as "medium," and two (individuals) as stout. One was very lean.

Hair.—In rather more than half the number of subjects the hair on the head was noted as *thick* and *wavy*. In most of the others it was *moderately thick*. In two only it was thin. In two it was *curly*. A man aged 27 had very slight growth of hair on the face (none on the cheeks), but had a fairly strong growth in the small of the back. Individuals of 40, 42 and 62 were a little grey, while one of 45 was almost bald, and what hair he had was white. Very few had hair on the cheeks, or anything like a full growth thereof. It was observed in but two instances, and in a third as slight. But it is proper to remark that, in the earlier period of my investigations, I did not make special notes about whiskers. 142 564 *

Hair on the chest is, as usual, not easy to gauge when there obtains the custom of shaving it periodically, every fortnight or every month. In about a quarter of the subjects the growth is noted as moderate, and in a sixth as thick; in the rest as slight or very slight. In the case of a man aged 45 the hair was white as well as thick.

Hair on the arms was moderate to thick in 13, slight to very slight in 11, and absent in 1.

Hair on the legs was, in every case but one, moderate or thick; in the case of one, very thick. The exception was in the case of a man sick and ill developed.

+142 564 *Colour of the skin* (*Broca's colour types*).—The fairest was No. 40 (one only); and the two next fairest were 30 to 44 and 39 to 44. The darkest was 43. The average seems to be a little darker than 29 but not so dark as 28. Darker than the Kiriyattil.

Colour of the eyes (Broca).—The colour of the eyes of half the number was as No. 1, and that of the other half as No. 2. One exception was between Nos. 1 and 10. The average therefore is a dark brown; not black.

+301 564 [304] *Ornaments.*—Ears pierced, and the usual earrings (kadukkans) worn by those who can afford them. In one case the earrings were set with a red stone. The ornaments or adornments of various individuals were as follows:—

(1) Bell metal ring on the ring finger of right hand.

(2) Two brass rings on ring finger of right hand. A string of wool thrice round the right wrist to keep off fever at night.

(3) Tattooed circular mark over glabella. The operator was a woman of the Chetti caste, a travelling tattooer, and the cost of the operation 2 pies.

[515] [789] (4) One gold kadukkan in each ear. Two copper rings on ring finger of right hand. Washing the face with a hand wearing a copper ring removes black spots on the face, and prevents them coming. So said the wearer.

(5) Two amulets, silver cylindrical cases containing mantrams, worn on a string round the waist to keep off fever and devils. Amulet cases are often worn on the waist in the way of ornament pure and simple.

+163 564 *Prolificness.*—In 12 families the children born were 29 males and 34 females, or an average of 5·2 children to each family.

141 The average weight of 4 individuals was 119¼ lb.

The names of some of those examined.

613 Taravâd.	Name.	Occupation.	Age.
551 Blathâdi	Govindan	Cultivator	40
+564 Râvâri Chandil	Kêlu	Do.	22
Palôli	Kunju	Do.	25
463 Murikolipôil	Shangaran	Trader	21
115 Kuttadath	Krishnan	Writer	20
Thaikandi	Appu	Cooly	26
Thazhathadathil	Châthu	Do.	24
Erankulangara	Kittan	Milk seller	25
Vêlashêri	Cherukoman	Cultivator	40
Chêlattumal	Kunhunni	Cooly	44
Patavetti	Châthukutti	Cultivator	62

6:Fawcett G-5 (ca. 1900)1915

AW11 Kerala AW11
Nayar

SÛDRA NÂYARS.

We now come to the Sûdra Nâyars, men and women of which clan supply the house servants in the Nambûtiri Brâhmans' houses. It is only a few who are occupied in this way, however, and of all those examined only one is noted as a servant. The subjects were found in various parts of South Malabar, a few from the neighbouring Cochin Native State.

564*
[357]

141
564*

Ages ranging between 22 and 52.	Maximum.	Minimum.	Averages of 25.	To stature = 100.
Stature	173·3	151·1	165·9	...
Height, sitting	90·8	78·8	85·8	51·7
Do. kneeling	128·3	110·1	122·9	74·1
Span	186·0	158·3	174·3	105·1
Chest	89·0	76·0	81·1	48·7
Shoulders	43·4	37·4	40·2	24·2
Left cubit	48·6	41·4	46·1	27·3
Left hand, length	20·8	16·8	18·7	11·3
Do. width	8·6	7·3	8·1	...
Left middle finger	12·1	9·9	11·1	...
Hips	27·9	24·0	26·0	15·7
Left foot, length	27·0	23·1	25·3	15·3
Do. width	10·3	7·8	8·9	...
Cephalic length	20·2	17·7	19·2	11·6
Do. width	15·3	13·0	14·1	...
Do. index	86·4	65·0	73·8	...
Bigoniac	11·4	9·4	10·5	...
Bizygomatic	14·1	11·9	13·1	...
Maxillo-zygomatic index	85·7	76·6	80·3	..
Nasal height	5·4	4·0	4·7	2·83
Do. width	4·2	3·3	3·7	...
Do. index	89·1	67·9	79·4	...
Vertex to tragus	14·4	12·5	13·3	8·0
Do. to chin	21·3	17·7	19·6	11·8
Middle finger to patella	15·7	7·0	9·9	5·97

Note.—The individual whose cephalic index is the maximum was measured in Palghat, where there are many Pattar (East Coast) Brâhmans; his father was, in all probability, one of them. The index of no other equalled 79·0. One broad headed man, whose father was known to have been a Pattar Brâhman, was excluded from the averages.

There were but three subjects whose nasal height was 5 cm. and over.

Face.—Slight prognathism was noticed in one. In another the posterior portion of the parietal was curiously flat.

141 Some individuals were described in my notes—

*564 (1) Nasal bones wide and thick. Teeth project.

(2) Lips thick and somewhat projecting. Chin receding. The flesh on the chin is thick, giving it a rounded lump like appearance. Inion appears to be in a projecting ridge round the back of the head. (Cephalic length 19·7.)

(3) Supraciliary arches slight. Nasal notch. Nose straight. Lips slightly everted. Teeth in upper jaw project forwards. Eyes deep set. Inner corner of eyes a trifle oblique.

The last two specimens are uncommon; not typical. The thick lips and projecting teeth are not usually noticeable as in their case. The long oval face is the common [302] type. The fashion of wearing no hair on the face, shaving the head at the back and at the sides and a little [291] over the forehead, leaving but the oval patch on the vertex, no head covering being worn, gives the face an appearance of length. But while the average of the measure vertex to chin, for all the Nâyars,* reduced to stature equals 100, is 11·9, the same for 21 of the 30 different castes † examined in Malabar is greater. The Mukkuvan is as high as 13·4, while on the other hand the Nambûtiri is less, being but 11·7.

Figure.—One out of 25 is recorded as "stout." One-third were "slight." Nearly two-thirds were medium or thereabouts; and this seems to represent the average.

142 *564 *Hair.*—More than half are noted as having whiskers, that is, growth of hair on the cheeks. In two-thirds of the subjects the hair on the head was thick and wavy; in a few cases it was very thick. Individuals aged respectively 25, 32, and 52 were noted as being a little grey. In one-quarter of the total number the hair was thin to moderately thick. One individual of this clan is marked as having hair a little grey.

Hair on the chest.—Rather more than a quarter of the whole had thick to moderately thick hair. In the case of one man hair was thick all over the body, even on the back: everywhere except over the ribs, the front of the upper arm and shoulder. In another the hair on the small of the back was *thick*. In the greater number of individuals it was marked slight, and moderate, and in a few it was absent.

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* Group A included.

† Counting each clan of the Nâyars separately.

Hair on the arms.—In half the number of subjects it varied from moderate to thick; in the other half it was slight to very slight or (in a few) absent altogether. 142 564*

Hair on the legs.—In more than half it varied from moderately thick to very thick. One was noted as "like a bear." In one individual only it was noted as very slight.

Colour of the skin.—The darkest (one only) was between 42 and 43 (Broca's colour types). Two others were nearly as dark. The fairest was 44. Two others were nearly as fair. The average is between these extremes.

Colour of the eyes.—The darkest was No. 1 (Broca's colour types). The lightest between 2 and 3. Rather more than half were 2 or shades of 2, generally lighter, while nearly one-half were No. 1.

Ornaments.—As a rule the ordinary earrings are worn. 301 564* [304] A section of the clan calling themselves Ellenkiria (or Elleng Kiria—tender Kiria?) wear no earrings, though their ears are pierced. Some members of this section told me they never wore earrings, while others said they could wear them as a rule, but they could not wear them when they went to the Kôvilakam (palace) of the Zamorin.

[304] [845] The right nostril of one man was slit vertically as if for insertion of a jewel. His mother miscarried in her first pregnancy, so, according to custom, he, the child of her second pregnancy, had had h~~is nose~~ slit.

[782] Another wore a silver bangle. He had had a wound on his arm which was long in healing, so made a vow to the God at Tirupati (North Arcot District) that, if his arm was healed, he would give up the bangle at the Tirupati temple. He intended to *send* the bangle by a messenger, any one going to Tirupati, when his arm was quite healed: then only would he fulfil his vow. [771] If this illustrates how a vow *may* be fulfilled,—he had not vowed to go *himself* and give the bangle up, only to *give* the bangle [182] which was meanwhile convenient as an ornament,—the man's ideas about the God at Tirupati illustrate the confused ideas as to the personality and attributes of the Gods of Modern Hinduism which obtain in Malabar. He thought it was Baghavati whose shrine was the object of pilgrimage to Tirupati, but was not at all sure; indeed he was not sure whether it was a God or a Goddess. It is scarcely necessary to say that the God at Tirupati is a form of Vishnu.

Other individuals wore ornaments, thus—

(1) Gold ring on ring-finger of the left hand. Earrings with red stone. Amulet against the evil eye. [779]

*301 564 Copper sheet on which the charm was inscribed in a silver cylindrical case. Copper ring on ring-finger, right hand.

(2) Two copper rings on the ring-finger, right hand. Belongs to the Ellenkiria, so wore no earrings.

(3) Brass ring, ring-finger, right hand. Also of the Ellenkiria.

(4) Copper ring, ring-finger, right hand. Gold earrings of the ordinary pattern.

(5) The ordinary gold earrings. Silver string round the waist; not exclusively ornamental. He fastened his loin cloth to it.

*163 564 *Vital Statistics* were noted in but two cases. In one family there were two brothers and three sisters; in another, one brother and two sisters.

115 *564 613 551 463

Names, etc., of a few Taravâd.	Name.	Occupation.	Age.
Puthen Vitil	Krishnan	Cultivator	52
Paritbil	Achutan	Do.	27
Malabitil	Sivarâman	Do.	22
Cholale	Râman	Do.	20
Muthira	Narrâyanan	Teacher	26
Kanakath	Kunhi Krishnan *	Unemployed	22
Mannareth	Shangaran	Trader	30
Kûmbiyal	Kannan	Peon	25
Othianmâdattil	Gôvindan	Do.	33

NAMBIYÂR NÂYARS.

*553 564 Men of this clan affix Nambiyâr to their name. Thus, Gôvindan Nambiyâr, Kêlu Nambiyâr.

141 *564

Ages ranging between 20 and 40.	Maximum.	Minimum.	Averages of 22.	To stature = 100.
Stature	177·1	155·7	165·1	...
Height, sitting	89·3	80·0	84·2	51·0
Do. kneeling	129·8	115·0	122·0	73·9
Span	188·0	166·5	175·3	106·2
Chest	84·0	75·0	80·3	48·6
Shoulders	42·8	37·8	40·0	424·2
Left cubit	50·5	43·6	46·0	27·9

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* This individual had 'Menon' instead of Nâyar after his name, he having been invested with the distinction by the Zamorin.

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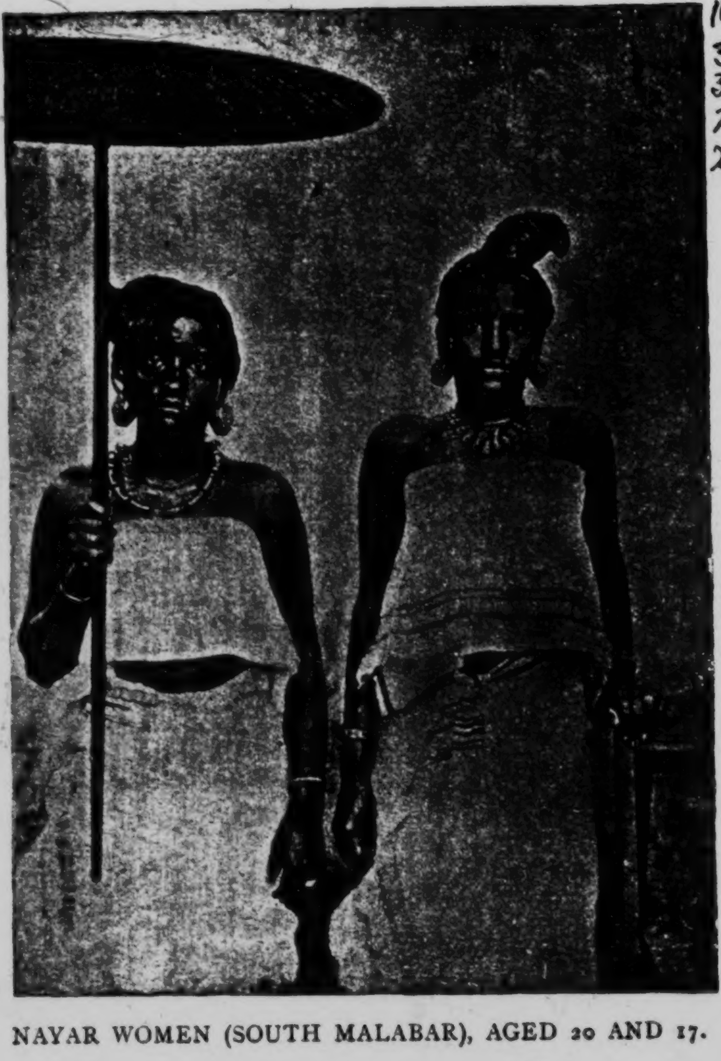
AW11 Kerala AW11

Nayar

PL. IX.



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302
301
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293

NAYAR WOMEN (SOUTH MALABAR), AGED 20 AND 17.

[Facing P. 210]

NAMBIYÂR NÂYARS—*cont.*

141
564*

Ages ranging between 20 and 40.	Maximum.	Minimum.	Averages of 22.	To stature = 100.
Left hand length	20·0	17·7	18·4	...
Do. width	8·5	7·3	7·8	...
Do. middle finger	12·5	10·3	10·9	...
Hips	26·7	24·4	25·4	15·4
Left foot length	27·2	23·6	25·2	15·3
Do. width	9·2	8·0	8·6	...
Cephalic length	20·6	18·3	19·2	11·6
Do. width	15·4	13·2	14·1	...
Do. index	79·3	69·4	73·7	...
Bigoniac	11·5	9·1	10·3	...
Bizygomatic	13·5	11·9	13·0	...
Maxillo-zygomatic index ...	87·1	73·8	79·2	...
Nasal height	5·5	4·2	4·8	...
Do. width	4·3	3·2	3·7	...
Do. index	92·9	62·7	77·3	...
Vertex to tragus	13·9	12·2	13·0	7·9
Do. to chin	21·4	18·2	19·7	11·9
Mid finger to patella	15·7	6·5	10·4	4·73

Note.—Although the number of subjects is limited to 22, the averages may be accepted as correct. The averages for 10 and for 25 are, as a rule, identical; in a few there is a trifling difference, but nowhere is the difference more than trifling.

In eight individuals the nasal height was 5 cm. or over. This is about 36 per cent.

In four the nasal index was 90 or over, and in four it was less than 70.

Face.—Observation was recorded in but nine instances.

The reason for this which seems to give examination of subjects a somewhat casual character, is that during the early part of my investigations my notes as to physical characteristics, shape of the nose, etc., were less complete than they were later on. Very seldom, in fact only in the case of the Irulans, was one caste examined completely at a time. It was impossible to work on the people caste by caste. Official duties rendered it impossible to regulate one's peregrinations so as to do so. Subjects were taken where and when they could be got hold of anywhere in the district.

In two cases only the supraciliary arches were rather prominent; in the others, slight or absent.

*141 *564 In four the nasal point was somewhat elevated. Slight prognathism with projecting teeth was observed in one individual, an unhealthy person.

Figure.—Seventy-one per cent. of the subjects were noted as "slight," 29 per cent. as "medium" and of those but two individuals are put down as "sturdily built."

*142 *564 *Hair.*—In three individuals hairiness was conspicuously apparent, there being hair nearly all over the body, and in one of these the hair in the small of the back was so thick that in my notes it is described as "like a bush."

On the head.—In nearly 80 per cent. of the subjects the hair on the head was "plentiful and wavy"; in a few of these it was "very thick," while in the remaining 20 per cent. it was "moderate." In no case was it noted as "thin" or "slight." The number of subjects in which growth of hair on the cheeks was noted was one-fifth of the whole.

On the chest.—In nearly a quarter, the hair on the chest was noted as "thick."

On the arms.—In most cases it varied from "very slight" to "moderate." Rarely "thick."

On the legs.—In nearly half it was "moderately thick" to "thick"; in the remainder, slight to moderate.

Colour of the skin.—It should have been noticed before that the colour of the face of the ordinary Malayali is invariably lighter than that of the body; possibly from the prevailing custom of using the umbrella. Malabar is for the most part shaded by trees and palms, and its peoples have not that disregard for the sun's javelins which we see in the country to the eastward. No one
[293] starts on a journey, and rarely leaves his house, without
his umbrella—the thing of cadjan now being by degrees
[(179)] replaced by the cheap umbrella of European manufacture. The labourer working in the field, the fisherman
292 in his boat on the sea, the boat-man on the backwater,
751 all wear a large umbrella-like hat. Women always carry an umbrella out of doors; or, as in North Malabar, an umbrella hat-like thing which seems to be a curious survival of the custom of wearing an umbrella hat, is carried. This is, apparently, an ordinary umbrella hat, but the central part, which appears to be made to fit the head, as in the ordinary umbrella hat, is too small by half to fit any head, and this hat-like umbrella is carried in the hand to shield the head from the sun and the face

292 751 from the inquisitive passer-by. The fact remains that the Nâyar, of whom we are now speaking, who never or very rarely wears any covering on the head, cannot withstand the effect of the direct rays of the sun without an umbrella. A few hours' walk in the midday sun where there is little or no shade, is sufficient to bring on fever to the ordinarily strong man.

142 564* Colour of the skin was taken generally on the right arm just below the shoulder, the book containing the colour types being pressed against the skin.

The fairest was No. 44 (Broca).

The darkest was No. 28 (only one of this).

More than half were 29 and fairer, and the remainder were still fairer, several being 44 or very nearly.

Colour of the eyes.—In about three quarters of the subjects the colour of the eyes was No. 2 (Broca); in about one-quarter they were 1 to a trifle darker. In one individual the colour was between 2 and 3; a light brown.

301 564* [304] *Ornaments.*—One or two golden kadukkans are commonly worn in each ear by those who can afford them. Ears pierced always. Though not for purposes of ornament, the ears of two individuals were marked by holes—pieces cut out of the cartilage. In one there was a circular hole 4 mm. in diameter, cut out of the cartilage of the right ear, and in another a circular hole 6 mm. in diameter in the left ear. In both cases the holes had been made during childhood to prevent colic.

The ornaments worn by a few individuals were as follows:—

(1) One tambâk ring on ring finger, right hand. One iron ring on the little finger of the left hand.

(2) One gold kadukkan in each ear. One plain gold ring on the ring finger of the right hand. Wore a silver girdle on the waist instead of a string, to which he fastened his lunguti.

[789] (3) Silver cord round the waist; on it a silver amulet case, of the usual shape, having inside it a charm written on a gold leaf to protect the wearer against the evil eye.

(4) One silver ring on ring finger of the left hand. Two gold kadukkans in each ear.

141 564* [151] *Miscellaneous.*—One man was tested, and found to have perfect vision. Weight was recorded in five cases only; the average was nearly 110 lb. which is probably not far from the general average.

*115
564 Names, etc., of some of those who were examined are given below:—

613

Taravâd.	Name.	Occupation.	Age.
463 Pathushêri ...	... Kanâran ...	... Rent Collector (for a temple).	22
551 Mâvila ...	... Kumâran ...	... Cultivator	21
Châlayil Kandôth	... Châttu ...	... .	22
Puthiotil ...	... Râman ...	... Servant	22
Chalil Kannôth	... Anandan ...	... Cultivator	25
Ramath ...	... Kunhi Râman	... Landlord	34
Kalliat-panôli	... Râmuni ...	... Stamp vendor ...	30
Thêrugandi ...	... Paidal ...	... Cultivator	25

*564

PURATTU CHÂRNA NÂYARS.

553 Men of this clan bear the affix Nâyar after their name, as Gôvindan Nâyar, Gôpâla Nâyar.

14
*564

Ages ranging between 20 and 70.	Maximum.	Minimum.	Averages of 25.	To stature = 100.
Stature	174·8	155·0	166·1	...
Height, sitting	92·4	77·7	85·3	51·3
Do. kneeling	130·2	113·7	122·7	73·9
Span	184·1	155·6	174·0	104·7
Chest	87·6	69·7	79·6	47·9
Shoulders	43·9	33·3	39·6	23·9
Left cubit	49·1	42·0	45·8	27·6
Left hand length	19·3	16·8	18·5	11·1
Do. width	8·3	6·5	7·9	...
Do. middle finger	11·6	9·8	10·5	6·3
Hips	28·0	23·8	25·7	15·5
Left foot length	27·4	22·3	25·3	15·2
Do. width	9·9	7·4	8·7	...
Cephalic length	20·6	17·6	19·5	11·7
Do. width	15·5	12·9	14·5	...
Do. index	81·5	65·2	72·2	...
Bigoniac	11·1	9·3	10·3	...
Bizygomatic	13·9	11·7	13·0	...
Maxillo-zygomatic index	88·8	73·9	79·5	...
Nasal height	5·2	4·0	4·8	2·88
Do. width	3·9	2·9	3·6	2·17
Do. index	90·0	56·9	76·8	...
Vertex to tragus	14·4	12·2	13·1	7·9
Do. to chin	21·1	17·5	19·8	11·9
Middle finger to patella	17·5	5·3	10·7	6·44

Cephalic length.—In 8 individuals or 32 per cent. of the whole, the cephalic length was 20·0 or over. The maximum cephalic width (of one individual only) is abnormal; the next nearest to it is 14·8. In 6 individuals the nasal

length was 5 cm. or over. In one individual the iliac 141
bone was much higher at the right side than on the left. 564*

Face.—A few individuals were noted thus—

(1) Deep nasal notch. Nasal point slightly elevated. Helix of ear very thin; the Darwin's point in the centre of the curve on the left and high up on the right.

(2) Deep nasal notch. Chin receding. Lips thick.

(3) Slight nasal notch. Supraciliary arches developed at outer edges. Chin recedes.

(4) Supraciliary arches and glabella in one marked ridge. Nasal point somewhat raised. Nasal notch.

(5) Very deep nasal notch. Very wide and thick eyebrows.

Figure.—More than half are marked as slight—a few of them "very slight"; the rest "medium." None "stout."

Hair.—As a rule, to which exceptions are very few, 142
hair on the head is thick and wavy: curly in the case of 564*
one individual. The hair of a man of 70 was noted as "very thin and grey." A man of 31 also had hair which was "thin and grey," but he was exceptional. The growth of hair on the cheeks—whiskers—was observed in almost every subject.

Hair on the chest.—The average is "moderate."

On the arms.—The growth of hair in half of the subjects was "slight to very slight"; in the other half, "moderate to thick."

On the legs.—It was noted as "moderate" to "thick" in more than three-fourths of those examined; in a few, "slight."

The growth of hair of a few individuals is here specified—

(1) Aged 54. Hair on the head moderately thick and grey. Hair on the face white. Growth of hair on the cheeks. Hair all over chest grey. Very long thick hair on the back. Hair on the legs and arms thick.

(2) Aged 36. Hair on the head moderately thick and wavy. Glossy black. On chest and middle line of abdomen, moderate. On the arms and legs moderately [302]
thick. Shaves the head (except the crown), face, chest, abdomen, wrists and hands, about every 15 days.

(3) Aged 28. Hair on the head thick and wavy. Growth of hair on cheeks; on the chin it is very thick. On the chest, moderate; on the arms, very slight; on the legs, thick. Does not shave his chest, as doing so [302]
would make him weak; on the other hand, if he does [753]
not shave his head and face, he will become sick. [826]

302 [777] Shaving cannot be done on a Tuesday or a Saturday, or on the day of an eclipse of sun or moon; nor on the full moon day, the new moon day, nor on the 11th day of the moon—the Êkadasi. This applies to most Nâyars, but not to all.

142 564 *Colour of the skin.*—The skin of the darkest individual corresponded to Broca's colour type No. 43. There was but one of this colour.

Three were of No. 28.

Seventeen were of No. 29 and lighter.

Three were of No. 37 and lighter.

One not taken.

The average colour must be nearly as fair as 37.

Colour of the eyes.—The average corresponds rather to Broca's No. 2 than to his No. 1.

Nine individuals were of No. 1.

Seven individuals were between 1 and 2.

Seven individuals were of No. 2.

Two not taken.

301 564 [304] *Ornaments.*—All those examined had had their ears pierced; but most of them wore no earrings, saying it was not proper for a Purattu Chârna Nâyar to wear them. Four individuals, or nearly one-sixth of the whole, however, wore the ordinary earrings; one indeed wore (the only instance) one gold and one silver earring in each ear. Rings of any kind may be worn on the fingers, and the thin iron ring such as is usually worn, was observed occasionally on the ring finger of the right hand, or on the little finger of the left.

The ornaments worn by a few individuals were as follows:—

[789] (1) Aged 23. Two rings on the ring finger of the right hand; one of them tambâk (described already), the other of silver and iron. The last was worn as a prophylactic against fever. Said he had worn it for the previous five days, and during that period he had had no fever! (This individual, by the way, had been vaccinated, and suffered from an attack of small-pox nine years afterwards.)

[237] [789] [776] (2) Aged 35. One copper ring on the ring finger of the right hand. An amulet of tiger's teeth (as in my collection) on a string round the waist. The amulet contains nothing, and is worn to protect its wearer from fever. Two silver amulet cases of the usual cylindrical pattern worn on the waist; each contains a mantram written on paper for protection against evil spirits. On

one occasion he was frightened when near water, and 301 564*
subsequently was troubled by beings called Pûtams, devils of a very inferior kind which haunt water. He had [776] bad dreams, so consulted a Mâppila priest (a Musaliar [789] —a priest of sorts) who gave him the mantrams. Wore also a charm—"to entice the public" as he explained, so that people will, as a rule, like him, please him, flatter rather than annoy him. He got this too from a Mâppila priest—a Mullah.

(3) Aged 24. This man had travelled. At Dvâraka the city of Krishna, the ninth incarnation of Vishnu [304] (in the Kulluva peninsula), a chank above and a chakkra below had been branded on his left upper arm, on his right, a chank above and a lotus below. Each forearm bore the branded mark of an indistinct seal said to represent Krishna, testifying to a visit to the temple at Dharnidara. Had been to Benares and worshipped his ancestors at Gaya (throwing their ashes into the Ganges), an operation which at once removes all necessity to give them any further attention.

Prolificness.—In 9 families, in respect of which notes 163 were taken, there were born altogether 48 children, 30 563 male and 18 female, or about 53 children to each family.

Following the rule, or rather custom, which governs 564* all marital connexions amongst the Nâyars, a woman of this clan may be mated with a man of the same clan, or with a man of the Kiriyattil clan, but with no other clan. Consequently, a man of this clan cannot be mated with a Kiriyattil woman, for the woman can never mate with one who is not at least her equal.

Names of some of those examined. 115

Taravâd.	Name.	Occupation.	Age.	551
Kizhâk Vellat ...	Kundu	Cultivator	42	463
Panôli	Konti	Do.	22	
Karuthôdiyil ...	Gôvindan Kutti ...	Head of his family ...	21	613
Vellât	Gôpâlan	Cultivator	24	564*
Pudieth	Kanaran	Schoolmaster	23	
Puttikapureth ...	Kelukkutti Menon* ...	Writer	36	
Karumuthil ...	Kandar, *alias* Kunja Panikkar.* ...	Cultivator	70	
Pâlat	Râma Panikkar ...	Do.	56	
Kâkkât	Gôvindan	Do.	20	

---

* The affix (Panikkar, Menon) is a title, not necessarily but possibly hereditary. [553]

Note.—I find I have noted one man as Viyyâr Purattu Chârna, as if Viyyûr is a sub-clan, and that he marries in his own sub-clan; but I am not sure whether the Purattu Chârnas are so sub-divided, and think not.

*
564

AKATTU CHÂRNA NÂYARS.

This is one of the relatively inferior clans. It is not one of the fighting clans, as the Purattu Chârna. The clan is divided into two sub-clans, one of which looks to the Zamorin as their lord, and the other owns lordship to minor lordlings, as the Tirumulpâd of Nilambûr. The former are superior; and a woman of the latter may mate with a man of the former, but not *vice versâ.* The men, but not the women of the two sub-clans, may eat together. There is no distinctive name for the sub-clans. As mentioned already, women of this clan are under no restriction as to residence or travel as are those of the superior clans; hence, of late, officials in North Malabar, officials or vakils residing in Madras, have been wiving with these women. The women may mate with men of their own or of any other clan or with a Nambûtiri. Not so the men, who can marry women of their own clan only.

* 141
564

Ages ranging from 20 to 44.	Maximum.	Minimum.	Averages of 25.	To stature = 100.	Remarks.
Stature ...	179·4	154·7	165·0	...	
Height, sitting ..	92·0	79·7	85·5	51·8	
Do. kneeling ...	132·6	113·8	122·3	72·1	
Span ...	190·4	161·9	175·2	106·2	
Chest ...	89 0	76·6	81·0	49·0	
Shoulders ...	42·5	37·4	40·1	24·3	
Left cubit ...	51·1	42·4	45·9	27·8	
Left hand length ..	21·2	16·9	18·4	*11·1	* 1[illegible]15
Do. width ...	8·8	7·3	8·0	..	
Left middle finger ...	12·7	10·1	10·9	6·6	
Do. hips Do. ...	28·4	24·1	25·9	15.7	
Left foot length ...	28·7	22·3	†25·1	15·2	† 25·15. In one subject greatest length was measured to the second toe.
Do. width ...	9·8	7·9	8·8	...	
Cephalic length ...	20·4	17·0	19·1	11·6	
Do. width ...	15·5	13·0	13·9	...	
Do. index ...	80·6	67·2	72·8	...	
Bigoniac ...	11·2	9·8	10·5	...	
Bizygomatic ...	14·2	11·8	13·0	...	
Maxillo-zygomatic index.	85·4	78·5	81·2	...	
Nasal height ...	5·4	4 0	4·7	2·84	
Do. width ...	4·1	3·1	3·6	...	
Do. index ...	90·9	63·0	77·0		
Vertex to tragus ...	13·9	11·8	12·9	7·9	
Do. to chin ...	20·9	17·9	19·6	11·9	
Middle finger to patella.	13·5	3·3	9·9	5·97	

In three the cephalic length was 20 cm. or over. In 141 564* nine the nasal height was 5 cm. or over.

Face.—The notes made on a few individuals will be set down here. In most cases the supraciliary arches were well marked, and the nasal notch was deep. Nose generally straight, or nasal point slightly raised. Prognathism rare. Lips, especially the lower lip, often very thick.

(1) Very well bred looking. Eyebrows fleshy and thickly marked. Supraciliary arches very slight. Deep nasal notch. Nose straight; nasal point raised very slightly—and very well shaped. In the left ear a very small hole above the usual one in the lobe; I have not noted why it was made.

(2) Supraciliary arches rather prominent. Upper portion of forehead somewhat protuberant. Deep nasal notch. Nasal point raised. Lower lip thick. This man's father was a Nambûtiri. He appears in the plate.

(3) Forehead high. Deep nasal notch. Slight prognathism. Lower lip very thick.

(4) Supraciliary arches not marked. Nasal notch moderate. Lips thin.

Two out of the twenty-five were deeply pitted with [164] small-pox, the Malabar goddess of small-pox, Bhânnâra- [776] mûrti, having hurt them. In one man the broadest part of the head was above the ears, a little in front.

Figure.—The number of those put down as slight and those put down as medium are about equal.

Hair.—Worn in the usual Malayali fashion which has 142 been described already and, as a rule, plentiful and wavy; 564* treated with gingelly oil, which is sometimes perfumed. The number of individuals whose hair (on the head) was [302] noted as "very thick and wavy" is abnormally large. A young man aged 24 had some white hairs here and there on his head; a man of 35 was a little grey; a man of 39 also; and one of 44 was quite grey. Whiskers or growth of hair on the cheeks were observed in more than half the number of subjects. In several there was hair, fairly thick in some, in the small of the back, and one man had thick hair all over the back.

Hair on the chest was "moderate" or "thick" in more than half.

Hair on the arms was "moderate to thick" in about half; in the other half "slight."

Hair on the legs was, as a rule, thick: rarely less than moderately thick. The legs of one man were like those of a bear.

*142 The hair on the person of a youth aged 20 (No. 1
564 above) was noted thus—

(*a*) On the head very plentiful, black, glossy and wavy; treated with gingelly oil. Sprouting on the lip and chin. A small patch of moderate thickness on the sternum; slight on the arms; moderate on the legs.

Another, aged 25—

(*b*) On the head very thick, and approaching the outer edge of the eyebrows. Thick on the chest and mid line of abdomen, although these parts have been shaved recently, as also the arm pits. Thick hair in the small of the back. Slight growth on the back. Moderate on the arms; thick on the legs.

[302] The individual (*a*) said he shaved any day of the
[613] week, and any day of the month. He was the Kârnavan of his Taravâd: a very youthful one.

Colour of the skin.—The fairest was between 33 and 40 (Broca); the darkest was 43 (redder). The average seems to be between 29, 37 and 44.

Colour of the eyes is a light brown. The actual numbers are—

Of colour	type	No.	1	(Broca)	5	individuals.
"	"	"	1 to 2	"	6	"
"	"	"	2	"	7	"
"	"	"	2 to 3	"	5	"

(Two were not included.) So that, although the eyes of rather more than one-fifth were dark brown, what would ordinarily be called black, the remainder were distinctly lighter in colour; and the number of persons whose eyes might be called quite a light brown, equalled those whose eyes were nearly black.

*141 *Weight* of but 3 was recorded. The average is 105½
564 lb.

163 *Prolificness.*—In the 8 recorded instances the average
number of children in each family was 3·7. It will be
*564 remembered that this clan is perhaps most of all under process of intermixture, its women mating with men of several higher clans (their own included) and with Nambûtiris.

301 *Ornaments.*—Ears are always pierced, and the usual
*564 Malabar earrings—kadukkans—are worn; sometimes as
[304] many as four in each ear. Individuals were noted thus—

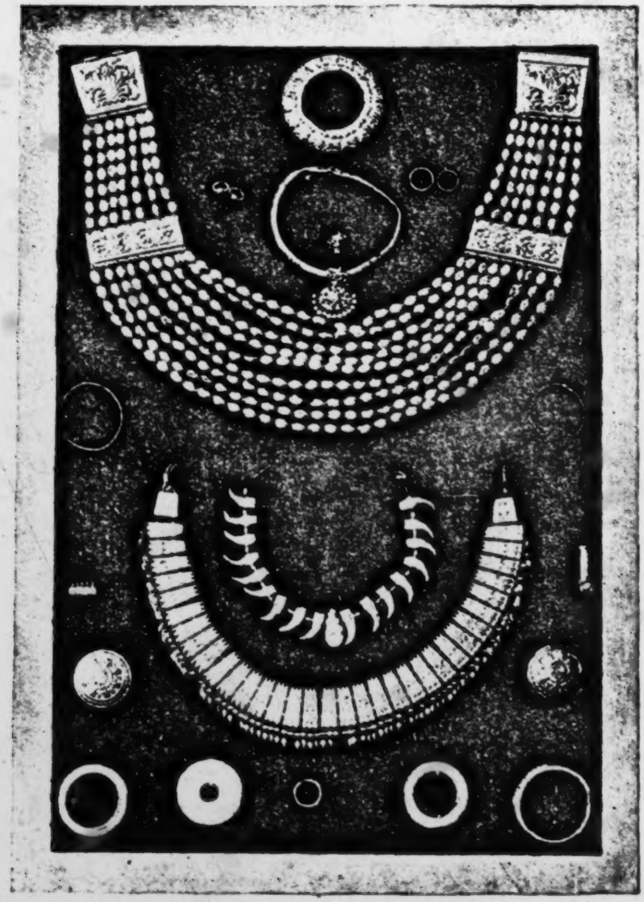
(1) Aged 24. Circular patch of sandalwood paste, 1·8 cms. in diameter over the glabella. Two stripes of sandalwood paste on each upper arm. No ornaments,

6:Fawcett G-5 (ca. 1900)1915

AW11 Kerala AW11
Nayar

PL. X.

301



JEWELLERY WORN BY NAYAR WOMEN.

[Facing P. 220]

(2) Aged 32. Four gold earrings in each ear. One "tambâk" ring on ring finger of left hand. A ring made of a bit of wire picked up on the road worn on the ring finger of left hand. 301 564*

(3) Two gold earrings, set with a red stone, in each ear. Wears an amulet, contained in the ordinary cylindrical amulet case; but I have not noticed what the amulet itself actually is. He used to be much troubled by a devil, the departed spirit of an east-country Brâhman who died by drowning. He wore the charm to keep this gentleman off. [775] [789]

(4) Aged 24. A silver girdle worn, instead of a string, to which the languti is tied. An iron ring on the 3rd toe of the left foot. Rings are very rarely worn on the toes by any people in Malabar. All over the rest of the Madras Presidency they are, of course, common.

(5) Aged 39. Three earrings, of the usual pattern in each ear. A ring called an elephant's ring, made of silver, in which is arranged circularly a piece of the hair of an elephant's tail, worn on the ring finger of the left hand. There is one of these rings in my collection.

Names, etc., of a few are given—

Taravâd.	Name.	Occupation.	Age.	115
Pilathottathil ...	Thêyyan Mênon ...	Amshom Mênon or writer. ...	44	551 613
Potishêri	Unikkandan ...	Post runner	31	463
Valia parambath ...	Râman	Peon	20	
Chatho Vîtil	Vêlappa Mênon ...	Servant	26	564*
Chandrethil ...	Kuttan	Do.	22	
Earat	Krishnan	Cartman	39	
Kanjôli	Shangara Mênon ...	Writer in a temple ...	34	
Kôlangyarath ...	Chandu	Cooly	36	

This last-named individual was measured in the Cannanore Jail, in which institution he, a prisoner himself, filled the office of hangman. He had hanged 10 men in the jail, and, at the rate of 2 rupees a case, he was owed 20 rupees; a nice little sum, which he would be given when leaving the jail at the expiration of his sentence. I was surprised to find a man of the Nâyar caste filling the office of hangman, so enquired the reason and was informed he had put aside the caste scruples while in jail. The office was in its way lucrative, and, when he emerged into freedom, no one would be the wiser, and he would have twenty and odd rupees in his pocket. He did not mind violating certain principles of his caste, doing that which is derogatory, so long as no one knew; but he *did* mind being found out. 564* 693 183

KURUP NÂYARS.

*141 564 [114] The number examined, 8, is not, of course, enough on which to base dependable averages. The men of this clan are—judging by the average such as it is—the tallest of all those examined. Tall, straight, well-bred looking men they are, carrying with them an air of independence and self-respect as one of the old fighting clans. It will be observed that the cephalic length is greater than the average for all the Nâyars, while the cephalic index is less, showing that they are longer headed, and more dolichocephalic than the average Nâyar. Again, the measure of vertex to chin is much greater than in any other clan; and their faces are narrower. The index $\frac{\text{Bizygomatic} \times 100}{\text{Vertex to chin}}$ gives the Nambûtiri one of 69.5, all the Nâyars excluding the Kurups 66.2, and the Kurups 64.5.

[551] The men are called by their clan name, Râma Kurup, Krishna Kurup, Gôvinda Kurup. The name Rama seems to be a favourite one, as four out of eight were so called.

Ages ranging between 20 and 72 *.	Maximum.	Minimum.	Averages of 8.	To stature =100.
Stature	174·9	163·4	167·1	...
Height, sitting	88·8	82·9	85·7	51 3
Do. kneeling	130·3	120·2	124·1	74·3
Span	184·8	173·0	178·6	106·8
Chest	89·4	78·3	82·4	49·3
Shoulders	42·2	38·8	40·4	24·2
Left cubit	51·0	45·1	47·5	28·4
Left hand length	20·8	18·2	19·3	11·5
Do. width	8·8	7·7	8·2	..
Left middle finger	12·3	10·9	11·5	6·9
Hips	28·4	24·5	26·4	15·2
Left foot length	28·0	24·9	26·4	15·2
Do. width	9·5	8·0	8·8	...
Cephalic length	20·6	18·9	19·5	11·7
Do. width	14·6	13·4	14·0	...
Do. index	74·6	68·9	72·0	..
Bigoniac	10·9	9·6	10·3	...
Bizygomatic	13·7	12·3	13·1	...
Maxillo-zygomatic index	83·5	76·7	79·6	...
Nasal length	5·3	4·4	4·8	2·87
Do. width	3·9	3·4	3·7	...
Do. index	84·1	64·2	76·2	...
Vertex to tragus	14·3	12·3	13·2	7·9
Do. to chin	21·8	19·0	23·3	12·1
Middle finger to patella	13·0	3·6	9·2	5·51

[787] * The man who said he was by his horoscope 72 was put down by me as looking 58.

In two individuals (out of 8) the cephalic length was 141
over 20 cm. In three the nasal height was 5 cm. and 564*
over.

Face.—The notes made on two subjects are—

(1) Forehead high. Supraciliary arches distinctly developed. Very deep nasal notch. Nasal point elevated above the line of the nose.

(2) Supraciliary arches not apparent. Nasal point slightly elevated.

Figure.—The greater number are noted as slight; about one-third as medium to stoutly built.

Hair.—Much as those of the other clans. The man 142
who said he was 72, but who looked 58, showed no sign 564*
of baldness; his hair was but moderately grey. Another, aged 36, a very strongly-built man, was becoming bald. Baldness at his age is, I should say, rare.

Colour of the skin.—The average is a trifle darker than 29 (Broca). The fairest was fairer than 29, and the darkest was No. 43.

Colour of the eyes.—The average colour of those examined is between 1 and 2 (Broca).

Ornaments call for no remark; they are much as those 301
worn by other Nâyars. Ears are always pierced and 564*
earrings worn.
304

It would be profitless to deal separately with the 141
measures of the individuals comprising the group A in 564*
the same way as the others which are more or less complete, with the exception of the Kurup clan. As said already in the group A consists of—

2 of the Nelliôden clan.
2 „ Viyyûr clan.
1 „ Vangilôth clan.
1 „ Kitâvu clan.
3 of the Pallichan clan.
1 „ Muppattinâyiran clan.
2 „ Vyâpâri clan.
1 „ Attik' urissi clan.

and their measures taken collectively have been quoted. The Attikkurissi are endogamous, and the Kitâvu do not [301]
wear earrings.

At page 60, Bulletin, Vol. III, No. I, where, speaking 582
of the Nambûtiri Brâhmans, it was said that possibly it may be found that marriage between a brother's daughter and a sister's son may be found to produce the finest issue; to be the best for preservation of the race. This [564]*
kind of marriage of first cousins, but never of progeny of sisters or of brothers, is in a general way the rule throughout Southern India, and it obtains amongst the

582
*[564] endogamous Attikkurissi clan of the Nâyars, who look
upon it as the most fitting union.

MARRIAGE.

58

> "The haughty nobles and the vulgar race
> Never must join the conjugal embrace."
>
> *The Lusiad.*

[656] The common assertion that there is no such thing as marriage amongst the Nâyars, so easily accepted in belief that the Government has been persuaded into a commission to examine the question and to pass an edict entitled "The Malabar Marriage Bill" (which happily fell dead, and is extremely unlikely to effect the customs of the Nâyars and others following the Marumakkattâyam law of inheritance), reminds one of the weary disquisition by people who are dull enough to try and prove that Shakespeare's plays were not written by Shakespeare, but by another fellow of the same name. No events of life being so realistic to man as marriage and death (to the individual, to the tribe, to the people) shallowness rather than sturdy hardihood of racial character is perhaps indicated when we find any downright change in the ceremonial of marriage, even though it be but some ephemeral divagation and not properly speaking radical change.

175 Buchanan, writing in 1800, tells us that Nâyar girls
are married before 10, so that they may not be deflowered
585 by nature, but the husband never afterwards cohabits
[582] with his wife. It would not be decent. He allows her
this and that, and she lives in her mother's house where
[837] she may admit a lover of her own or of a higher caste;
the lover giving her a small present; never a large one,
which would indicate that she was influenced by mercenary
837 motives. He says the young people vie with each
other for favour of the other sex, but that, should a Nâyar
175 man have intimacy with a Tîyan (a lower caste) woman,
564 he is put to death and the woman is sold to the Mâppilas!
In the case of the *chère amie* being a slave—presumably
of the Cheruman or cognate tribes—both are put to death.
[626] If this be true, there were forcible means used in those days for preventing intermixture of the people of the higher and lower castes. Buchanan tells us also that in North Malabar, where as a rule the lady lives in his home, the Nâyar or Nambûtiri lover may put her to death, should she be guilty of infidelity; and he may send her home whenever he pleases.

The times have changed things a little: a little only 178
because after all the change is on the surface: it is not
radical. Now-a-days, when there is a penal code to deal [671]
with persons who kill others, the Nâyar cannot keep a [595]
concubine of a caste (not a clan) lower than his own
without fear of social ex-communication. The killing, [564]
except perhaps now and then *sub rosâ*, is a thing of the [575]
past.

The custom which permits the woman to cohabit with 592
a man, her equal or superior in caste, has been alluded to
more than once. I will now make some use of the 564
(Government) Report of the Malabar Marriage Commission, [127]
published in 1894, which contains much information
which is extremely valuable to the anthropologist and
the folklorist, and none the worse for being found
together with views and opinions with which he cannot
agree. One of the points to which the Commission
directed special attention was "as to the customs
connected with Hindu marriages in Malabar" and the
evidence collected respecting these may be accepted as
correct, and the delineation of existing custom may be
taken as authoritative. Now the custom which permits
the man to cohabit with a woman lower in the social scale
than himself prohibits the woman from exercising the
same liberty. "This is called the rule of *Anulómam* and
Pratilómam. Dr. Gundert derives *Anulómam* from *anu* =
with + *lómam* = *rómam* = the hair: going with the hair or
grain. So *Pratilómam* means "going against the hair or
grain." According to this usage a Nâyar woman, consorting
with a man of a higher caste follows the hair,
purifies the blood, and raises the progeny in social
estimation. By cohabitation with a man of a lower
division (clan) or caste, she is guily of *Pratilómam*; and,
if the difference of caste were admittedly great, she
would be turned out of her family to prevent the whole
family being boycotted."

A corollary of this custom is that a Nambûtiri [783]
Brâhman father cannot touch his own children by his
Nâyar consort without bathing afterwards to remove the
pollution. The children in the Marumakkattâyam family [851]
belong, of course, to their mother's family, clan, caste.
They are Nâyars, not Nambûtiris; so the Nambûtiri
cannot touch them without pollution.

The rule of *Anulómam* and *Pratilómam* appears to be [184]
observed with the utmost strictness and thoroughness;
one finds it obtaining between members of the same clan
inhabiting different parts of the country. Mention of this

582 was made on page 83, where it was said that a woman
564 of any clan of North Malabar may not consort with a
184 man of the same clan name belonging to South Malabar.
Following this principle, the man may do so. A woman
of South Malabar (inferior), mating with a man of her
own clan name of North Malabar (superior), would be
following anulômam; but a woman of North Malabar
cannot, under pain of being guilty of pratilômam, mate
with a man of her own clan name of South Malabar.
564 Alliances between the people of North Malabar and
484 South Malabar seem to be extremely rare; partly, perhaps,
784 because of this custom which is all compulsive,
partly because the Nâyar women of North Malabar
[628] cannot cross the river which marks the boundary between
the two. Nor, as said before, can the Nâyar women of
Chirakkal, the northern-most portion of Malabar, cross
the river which lies between it and South Canara to the
northward. Thus, they cannot go beyond their northern
or southern boundaries. The origin of this interdiction
to cross the river southwards has been explained to me
as emanating from a command of the Kólattiri Rajah in
days gone by, when, the Arabs having come to the
country about Calicut (South Malabar), there was a
chance of the women being seized and taken as wives.
An explanation which is somewhat fanciful. The prohibition
to cross the river to the northwards is supposed to
have originated in much the same way, but I have not
564 noted precisely what it is. Again, men of the Kurup
clan of Katattanâd may mate with women of the
582 Nambiyâr clan who live in Kôttayam, but they may not
mate with women of the Nambiyâr clan living in
Chirakkal. The custom imputing superiority or inferiority
to those of a clan inhabiting a certain locality is
obscure; it has its counterpart elsewhere in Malabar.

"Except the Nambûtiri, the Nâyar has no other
793 priestly, spiritual or religious instructor; and it is for the
564 gratification of this Bhú-dévan (earth god) that the Sûdra
woman, if she has any religious instruction at all, is
taught that she was created." We have heard what
Hamilton has said about this (see Bulletin, Vol. III, No. I).
Though the first portion of this statement is not quite
accurate, for we have seen that the priests and religious
instructors of the Nâyars are not admitted to be, strictly
speaking, Nambûtiris, yet on the whole it is not far wrong,
as the Nambûtiri is esteemed as a very exalted person,
and he may ply his music among the Nâyar ladies without
very much restriction. As remarked before, the

custom is one which makes for improvement of the race, 793 bound up as it is with the Marumakkattâyam system, 564 which, guided by the anulômam principle, has fewer hindrances in the way of natural selection than perhaps any other marital custom throughout the world.

The divine commands of Srí Parasu Râma, the 793 imputed originator of the Marumakkattâyam system 564 which is followed by 70 per cent. of the people of Malabar, are supposed to be contained in the Kêrala 773 Mâhâtmyam, a work in Sanskrit verse, written on the ordinary Malabar grantham (palm-leaf book). It purports to be a monologue "addressed by the Rishi Garga to Yudhishthira the eldest of the Pândus." Chapter XLIX relates "how certain celestial damsels were brought from Indra's world by Parasu Râma to satisfy the sexual cravings of the Kêralam Brâhmans, and it relates how Parasu Râma at Vishabhadri (Trichûr), pronounced his commandment to the women (not being of the Brâhman caste) to satisfy the desires of Brâhmans, enjoining on them to put off chastity and the cloth which covered their breasts, and declaring that promiscuous intercourse with three or four men in common was void of the least taint of sin." Unfortunately no scholar has given his opinion as to the time when this was written. Most likely it is not very ancient, and may be attributed to device of the Nambûtiris. But it is respected as authoritative. "One of the foremost Nambûtiris in Malabar in respect of wealth, rank, sanctity and learning," in common with the rest of his clan, relied absolutely on it, and informed the Commission: "The Smiriti says the Sûdras' appointed path to heaven is serving the Brâhmans." "The practice of Brâhmans . . . . . having sexual intercourse with servile (Sûdra) women is in accordance with the Sástras." "If 564 a Brâhman wished to have sexual intercourse with a 837 Sûdra's wife, the Sûdra would be bound to gratify the wish." "A Sûdra cannot be sure of the true parentage of the children born of his wife. Hence the Sûdras cannot follow Makkattâyam"—inheritance in the male line. The Zamorin Maharajah Bahadur informed the Commission that "according to Parasu Râma . . . . chastity should not be observed by non-Brâhman females." Again, the "Ettan Tamburan," one of the senior members of the Zamorin's family, a learned Sanscrit scholar said: "It has been ordained by Parasu Râma that in Kêrala, Marumakkatâyam women need not be chaste;" and he quoted a sloka in proof that there

564 837 should be no such thing as chastity excepting amongst the Brâhman women. And the Kolatûr Vâriyâr, a great personage: "A woman is not forbidden from consorting with more than one man. For the Marumakkatâyam people, who reckon their descent in the female line, there is no objection to any cohabitation which does not contaminate the female element."

581 The opinions which have been quoted are those of persons of the highest position, principals of the oldest families, and give expression to the old-fashioned Malabar custom which they would be the last to condemn. But it must not be imagined that the goddess Lubricity reigns supreme in Malabar. It seems perhaps to have been indicated that she does. Such is, however, not the case. It has been said by one whose long acquaintance with Malabar gives him what we may call admitted right to express authoritative opinion, that, "nowhere else is the marriage tie more jealously guarded, and its breaches more savagely avenged." We shall know more of the subject presently, when we have done with all that pertains to formal union between the sexes. As a matter of fact lubricity has no more followers in Malabar than elsewhere.

585 764 182 The ceremonies surrounding marriage and death seem to be those in which human feelings are deepest, and consequently in these, more than in any others, we see relics of a long gone past; much of the ceremonial being now apparently meaningless, and handed on after the manner of all ceremonial, for no obvious purpose, long after the original signification has been forgotten. Amongst all races of the world it is the same. These form perhaps—for the ceremonies connected with death are interwoven with primitive religious ideas—the closest links between our earlier ancestors and ourselves. The institution marriage itself is not easily liable to change or even modification, and thus it is, perhaps, that it, the product of a byegone age, is not always suited to the wants of the age in which it is found. It is rarely up to date. It is invariably blended with superstitions and restraints which people believe they believe; and the relations between the sexes are rarely natural, *i.e.*, rarely free from restraints which are souvenirs of the past, and which are resented in the present. Of course amongst primitive peoples changes in respect of marital connexions, as also in respect of death ceremonies, are imperceptible. They must be very small indeed in even an immense period; and in their case there is not that

unsuitability to the time in which they exist, which is 585
apparent amongst those societies more liable to change. 764

But whatever the reasons may be, the relations 182
between the sexes in Malabar are unusually happy.
They seem to be more than commonly natural. The 593
most obvious reason for their being so is that they are
less influenced by considerations of property than else- [421]
where. The desire to maintain property within the family is the curse of all natural relations between the sexes. What strange customs has it not put upon mankind! We have some strange examples of these in Southern India, as when a woman is married to the door-post of the house, and the house owner begets children on her to inherit his property; or when a man marries his child to a woman, and himself begets children on her, and the individual who stands in the position of father may be but a few years older than the son. But we need not look farther than Europe for anomalous customs which inhibit the working of the law of natural selection. Malabar is fairly free from unfortunate customs, and it is perfectly fair to say the marital relation amongst the Nâyars is more than commonly natural.

A description of the ceremonies and formalities 588
connected with the marital connexion will now be [121]
attempted. The first of these, described as "most peculiar, distinctive, and unique," is the Tâli-kettu-kalyânam. The details of this ceremony vary in different parts of Malabar, but the ceremony itself, in some form, is essential, and must be performed for every Nâyar girl before she attains puberty. Tâli-kettu-kalyânam means marriage by tying the tâli, or ceremony of tying the tâli, a small golden ornament, worn on the neck, the ordinary badge of marriage amongst the Dravidian peoples.

The following account was given by M.R.Ry. 564
K. R. Krishna Menon, retired Sub-Judge, to the Com- 613
mission:—

"The Tâli-kettu-kalyânam is somewhat analogous to what a 588
Dévadâsi (dancing girl attached to pagodas) of other countries undergoes before she begins her profession. Among royal families, and those of certain Edaprabhûs, a Kshatriya,—and among the Chárna sect, a Nedungádi,—is invited to the girl's house at an auspicious hour appointed for the purpose, and in the presence of friends and castemen ties tâli round her neck, and goes away after receiving a certain fee for his trouble.
Among the other sects, the horoscope of the girl is examined [787]

564 613 588 [787] along with those of the boys of her Enangan (a recognised member of one's own clan) families, and the boy whose horoscope is found to agree with hers, is marked out as a fit person to tie the tâli, and a day is fixed for the ṭâli-tying ceremony by the astrologer, and information given to the Káranavan of the boy's family. On the appointed day the boy is invited to a house near that of the girl, where he is fed with his friends by the [574] head of the girl's family. The feast is called 'Ayani Unu,' and the boy is thenceforth called 'Manaválan' or 'Pillai' bridegroom. From the house in which the Manaválan is entertained, a procession is formed, preceded by men with sword and shield shouting a kind of war-cry. In the meantime a procession starts from the girl's house, with similar men and cries, and headed by a member of her taravâd, to meet the other procession, and after meeting the Manaválan, he escorts him to the girl's house. After entering the pandal erected for that purpose, he is conducted to a seat of honour and there his feet are washed by the brother of the girl, who receives a pair of cloths on the occasion. The Manaválan is then taken to the centre of the pandal where bamboo-mats, carpets, and white cloths are spread, and seated there. The brother of the girl then carries her from inside of the house, and after going round the pandal three times, places her at the left side of the Manaválan, and the father of the girl then presents a new cloth tied in a kambli to the pair, and with this new cloth (technically called 'mantravadi') they change their dress. The wife of the Káranavan of the girl's taravâd, if she be of the same caste, then decorates the girl by putting anklets, etc. The Purohita called 'Elayatu' (a low class of Brâhmans) then gives the tali to the Manaválan, and the family astrologer shouts 'Muhurtham' (auspicious hour), and the Manaválan, putting his sword on the lap, ties tali round the girl's neck, who is then required to hold an arrow and a looking-glass in her hand. In rich families a Brâhmini sings certain songs intended to bless the couple. In ordinary families who cannot procure her presence, a certain Nayâr who is versed in songs performs the office. The boy and the girl are then carried by Enangans to a decorated apartment in the inner part of the house, where they are required to remain under a sort of pollution for three days. On the fourth day they bathe in some neighbouring tank or river, holding each other's hands. After changing cloths, they come home preceded by a procession, which varies in importance according to the wealth of the girl's family. Tom-toms and elephants usually form part of the procession, and saffron water is sprinkled. When they come home the doors of the house are all shut, which the Manaválan is required to force open. He then enters the house, and takes his seat in the northern wing thereof. The aunt

6:Fawcett G-5 (ca. 1900)1915
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PL. XI.

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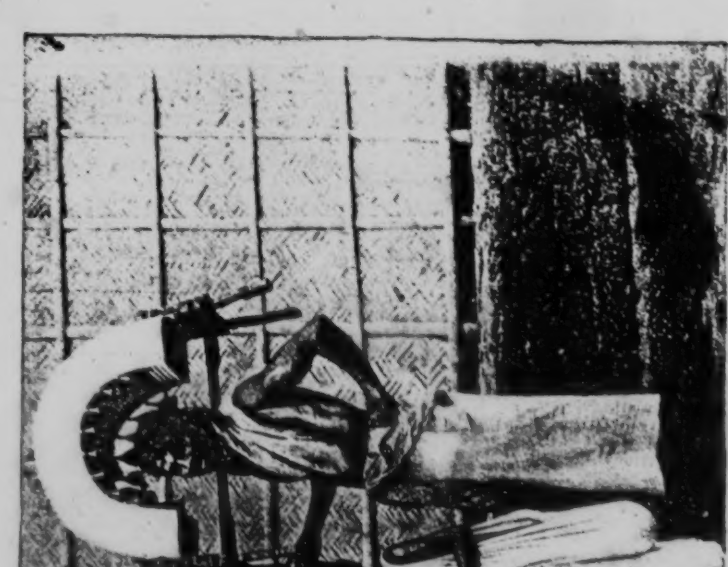

A PALNI PILGRIM, WITH HIS KAVADI.

[Facing p. 230]

and other female friends of the girl then approach, and give 564
sweetmeats to the couple. The girl then serves food to the boy, 613
and after taking their meals together from the same leaf, they 588
proceed to the pandal, where a cloth is severed into two parts, and each part given to the Manavâlan and girl separately in the presence of Enangans and other friends. The severing [586]
of the cloth is supposed to constitute a divorce."

If, as has been said, the "páttu" sung by the [533]
Brâhmani, in "*Rig Vêdaswaram*" is in substitution for the Vêdas sung at the Nambûtiri's wedding—because the Vêdas cannot be used by any but Brâhmans—this part of the ceremonial seems to indicate imitation of the Nambûtiris. The Brâhmani is not however a "Brâhman lady" but merely represents one. In North Malabar she is of the Nambîsan caste.

The ceremony is much more analogous to that obtaining in the Bellary district and round about it, through [171]
which women, called Basivis, are, after an initiatory ceremony of devotion to a deity, compelled (under certain conditions) to follow no rule of chastity, but whose children are under no degradation, than to the initiation of the Dêvadâsi in her career of harlotry.* It must be [735]
said, however, that the ceremony, more especially as modified by poor people, when the Manavâlan is repre- [184]
sented by a clay figure adorned with flowers, the handiwork of the girl's mother, looks very like it. But what demands consideration now is the position of Manavâlan to the bride. Does the ceremony confer on him any of the rights of a husband? There is much diversity of opinion on the point. Some say it does, while some say it does not. It seems certain that, as a rule, there can be no cohabitation between the two as a mere corollary of the tâli-tying ceremony. Should there be three girls in a family, *i.e.*, in the same taravâd house, aged, say, 9, 5 and 3, the ceremony is always done for all three at the same time. The only condition as to age of the girl is that the ceremony must be done before she reaches puberty. The bridegroom (to call him so) is selected after consulting agreement between his horoscope and the girl's. He is seated beside her in the marriage pandal, and he invests her with the tâli. They eat of the same [824]
plantain leaf (used as a plate throughout Malabar). They [415]
are placed in the same chamber, to go through the fiction

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* An account of the Basivis, their devotion to deities, etc., by the writer [113]
will be found in the "Journal of the Anthropological Society of Bombay," Vol. II., 6 (1891).

564 613 of cohabitation; and on the fourth day the bridegroom
588 severs his connection with the girl, symbolising divorce
by cutting into two pieces the cloth (called kachai cloth)
[184] which she wears. The tearing of the cloth is, however,
[586] confined to South Malabar. These are the essentials of
the ceremony, an adjunct to which is that, in spite of the
765 divorce, the girl observes death-pollution when her
Manavâlan dies. The same Manavâlan may tie the tâli
783 on any number of girls, during the same ceremony or at
any other time; and he may be old or young. He is
often an elderly holy Brâhman, who receives a small
present for his services. The ceremony is always the
occasion of feasting and jollification. The girl may
remove the tâli if she likes after the fourth day.

588 In some parts of Malabar there is no doubt that the
man who performs the rôle of Manavâlan is considered
to have some right to the girl, but in such a case it has
been already considered that he is a proper man to enter
into Sambandham with her. It will be as well to remark
here that almost invariably amongst the inferior races,
the aboriginals so to speak of Malabar, girls are married
833 (their marriage is consummated) before puberty. The
fuss that was made a few years ago (by the shrieking
sisterhood) about the age of consent has had no effect
there.

613 The tâli-tying ceremony having been performed while
585 the girl is yet a child, the next step in the matter of
[588] her alliance with a man is the arrangement of the
Sambandham. As the rule nothing more than the consent of the girl and of her guardian, the Kâranavan of the family, is necessary. There is no religious formality. The tâli-tying ceremony dispenses with everything of the kind. There is, however, in some parts a tendency nowadays "to surround the occasion of first cohabitation with a more or less elaborate ceremonial." It is quite an informal affair, arranged by the Kâranavans of the two families. Many a time a young fellow of 22 or 24, answering my question whether he had contracted Sambandham with any one, replied that the head of his family had not yet arranged a Sambandham for him. The wishes of the contracting parties—for in great measure it is a contract—and of the heads of the families practically settle the matter. Should the parties find they are unsuited, they part. There is no dragging on under a bondage intolerable to both.

585 The following account was given by Mr. Chandu
184 Menon (a Nâyar) to the Commission. He says:—

"The variations of the Sambandham are the Pudamuri, 585
Vastradánam, Uzhamporukkuka, Vitáram Kayaruka, etc., which 184
are local expressions hardly understood beyond the localities in which they are used, but there would be hardly a Malayali who would not readily understand what is meant by *Sambandham tudan guga* (to begin Sambandham). The meaning of this phrase which means "to marry" is understood throughout Kéralam in the same way, and there can be no ambiguity or mistake about it.

"It is thus found that Sambandham is the principal word denoting marriage among Marumakkattayam Nâyars. It will also be found on a close and careful examination of facts, that the principal features of this Sambandham ceremony, all over the Kéralam, are in the main the same. As there are different local names denoting marriage, so there may be found local variations in the performance of the ceremony. But the general features are more or less the same. For instance, the examination, prior to the betrothal, of the horoscopes of the bride and the bridegroom to ascertain whether their stars agree astrologically : the appointment of an auspicious day for the celebration of the ceremony : the usual hours at which the ceremony takes place : the presentation of the *danam* (gifts) to the Brahmans : the sumptuous banquet : the meeting of the bride and the bridegroom,—are features which are invariably found in all well-conducted Sambandhams in all parts of Kéralam alike. But here I would beg to state that I should not be understood as saying that each and every one of the formalities above referred to, are gone through at all Sambandhams among respectable Nâyars, and I would further say that they ought to be gone through at every Sambandham, if the parties wish to marry according to the custom of the country. I would now briefly refer to the local variations to be found in the ceremony of the Sambandham, and also the particular incidents attached to certain forms of Sambandham in South Malabar. I shall describe the Putamuri, or Vastradanam, as celebrated in North Malabar, and then show how the other forms of Sambandham differ from it. Of all the forms of Sambandham I consider the *Pudamuri* form the most solemn and the most fashionable in North Malabar. Of course my description will be borne out by the evidence that is before us. The preliminary ceremony, 585
in every Putamuri, is the examination of the horoscopes of the
bride and the bridegroom by an astrologer. This takes place in 787
the house of the bride, in the presence of the relations of the 184
bride and bridegroom. The astrologer, after examination, writes down the results of his calculations on a piece of palmyra leaf, with his opinion as to the fitness or otherwise of the match, and hands it over to the bridegroom's relations. If the horoscopes

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184 agree, a day is then and there fixed for the celebration of the
[787] marriage. This date is also written down on two pieces of
cadjan, one of which is handed over to the bride's Kâranavan,
[574] and the other to the bridegroom's relations. The astrologer and
the bridegroom's party are then feasted in the bride's house, and
the former also receives presents in the shape of money or cloth ;
and this preliminary ceremony, which is invariably performed
at all Putamuris in North Malabar, is called 'Putamuri Kurikkal,'
but is unknown in South Malabar.

"Some three or four days prior to the date fixed for the
[584] celebration of the Putamuri, the bridegroom visits his Kâranavans
and elders in caste to obtain formal leave to marry. The
[613] bridegroom on such occasion presents his elders with betel and
nuts, and obtains their formal sanction to the wedding. On the
[564] day appointed the bridegroom proceeds, after sunset, to the
house of the bride, accompanied by a number of his friends.
He goes in procession, and is received at the gate of the house
by the bride's party, and is conducted with his friends to seats
[431] provided in the tekkini, or southern hall of the house. There
the bridegroom distributes presents (*danam*) or money gifts to the
[574] Brahmans assembled. After this the whole party is treated
to a sumptuous banquet. It is now time for the astrologer to
[787] appear, and announce the auspicious hour fixed. He does it
accordingly, and receives his dues. The bridegroom is then
taken by one of his friends to the *padinhatta* or principal room
of the house. The bridegroom's party has, of course, brought
with them a quantity of new cloths and betel leaves and
nuts. The cloths are placed in the western room of the
house, called padinhatta, in which all religious and other important
household ceremonies are usually performed. This room
will be decorated, and turned into a bed-room for the occasion.
There will be placed in the room a number of lighted lamps, and
Ashtamangaliam, which consists of eight articles symbolical of
mangaliam or marriage. These are rice, paddy, the tender leaves
of the cocoanut tree, an arrow, a looking glass, a well washed
cloth, burning fire, and a small round wooden box called
'cheppu' made in a particular fashion. These will be found
placed on the floor of the room aforesaid as the bridegroom
enters it. The bridegroom with his groom's-man enters the
room through the eastern door. The bride, dressed in rich cloth
and bedecked with jewels, enters the room through the western
door, accompanied by her aunt or some other elderly lady of her
family. The bride stands facing east with the Ashtamangaliam
and lit-up lamps in front of her. The groom's-man then hands
over to the bridegroom a few pieces of new cloth, and the bridegroom
puts them into the hands of the bride. This being done,
the elderly lady who accompanied the bride, sprinkles rice over

the lit-up lamps, and the head and shoulders of the bride and the 585
bridegroom, and the bridegroom immediately leaves the room, 184
as he has to perform another duty. At the tekkini or southern hall he now presents his elders and friends with cakes, and betel leaf and nuts. Betel and nuts are also given to all the [43] persons assembled at the place. After the departure of the guests the bridegroom retires to the bed-room with the bride.

"This is an unvarnished account of a 'Putamuri.' Next morning the Vettilakkettu or Salkâram ceremony follows, and the bridegroom's female relations take the bride to the husband's house, where there is a feasting, etc., in honour of the occasion.

"Uzhamporukkuka, or Vídâram Kayaral is a peculiar form of marriage in North Malabar. It will be seen from the description given above, that the Putamuri is necessarily a costly ceremony, and many people generally resort to the less costly ceremony of Uzhamporukkuka or Vídâram Kayaral. The features of this ceremony are to a certain extent the same as Putamuri; but it is celebrated on a smaller scale. There is no cloth-giving ceremony. The toasting is confined to the relations of the married couple. The particular incident attached to this form of marriage is that the husband should visit the wife in her house, and is not permitted to take her to his house, unless and until he celebrates the regular Putamuri ceremony. This rule is strictly adhered to in North Malabar, and instances in which the husband and wife joined by Uzhamporukkuka, or Vídâram Kayaral ceremony, and with grown-up children being the issue of such marriage, undergoing the Putamuri ceremony some 15 or 20 years after Uzhamporukkuka, in order to enable the husband to take the wife to his house, are known to me personally.

"The Sambandham of South Malabar, and the Kidakkorakalyânam of Palghat have all or most of the incidents of Putamuri, except the presenting of the cloths. Here money is substituted for cloths, and the other ceremonies are more or less the same. There is also *Salkâram* ceremony, wanting in South Malabar as the wives are not at once taken to the husband's house after marriage."

But all this formality and ceremonial is not the rule. The Sambandham is always a matter for careful arrangement, in which the wishes of the parties to it are considered, and which it is expected will bring mutual benefit to the two Taravâds concerned.

In South Malabar the girl or woman never lives in her 591
husband's house; she lives on in her own Taravâd house 184
and is there visited by her husband. The ordinary huggermugger, which sometimes stultifies all pleasure in existence, is thus avoided. In North Malabar the woman

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184 lives in the house with her husband. A point to be noted in this connection is that, when her husband dies, she must leave his house and return to her own at once, before his body is carried out. According to the Kêrala Mâhâtmyam the women in North Malabar (should) live with but one man at a time.

58 We still, after the manner of children, confound words with things, so it is not surprising that the unfortunate Commission arrived at the conclusion that the institution of marriage was and is entirely absent from the Marumakkattâyam system. "The parties do not plight troth, and do not call God to witness their union." And so forth. But with this conclusion, suitable enough to the high-flown moralist or to the restless beings who would regardlessly sweep away the long results of time and improve on the process of natural development, imposing fanciful arrangements of their own, the anthropologist cannot at all agree. The Sambandham, a regularly formed, and certainly not haphazard alliance between a man and a woman, having the full sanction of the community, is marriage in every sense of the word. If the tâli-tying ceremony gave the girl free liberty, we might well suspect that the Sambandham followed a ceremony,
[848] not a marriage ceremony. But such is by no means the case, for, should the woman who is unmarried, for whom Sambandham has not been arranged, or whose husband, the man with whom she had had Sambandham, is dead—there is no such thing as widowhood,—bear a child, she is disgraced, much as is the Brâhman widow under the same circumstances.

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585 What then is the meaning of the assertions of the exponents of the orthodox view that the woman need not be chaste; and so on? The question is not an easy one to answer, but I think we may say with confidence that this orthodox view has been, in some measure, propounded by the Nambûtiris for their own gratification.
[684] I have myself known several tragedies arising out of unfaithfulness, and I believe the old fashioned code of custom admitted the right of the husband to kill his wife's lover if he could, and also to kill his wife. No doubt in a great many cases the pair bound together in Sambandham lead lives ordinarily chaste. I do not, however, think that in actuality such is the rule with either party any more than it is in any other community, and sexual affairs are often treated lightly. With taste and consideration too, Hamilton, who arrived at Calicut in 1702, and spent some twenty odd years on the coast,

writes thus in speaking of the Nâyars:——" When the 581
man visits the woman he lays down his arms at the 585
door; but, if there are no arms at the door, any acquaintance
may visit her. To visit the house when there are [201
arms at the door, or remove them, is death." Now-a-days 178
a man leaves his shoes outside the door. Equality of the 562]
sexes in all sexual matters, the man and woman being on
terms of equality, having equal freedom, is certainly an
uncommon merit in the Marumakkattâyam system.
Either party may terminate the union—even after one 586
night of hymeneal bliss; and those who are unsuited to
each other sexually, or in the way of temperament, in
fact in any way, may put an end to their union and turn
towards other partners. It may be thought that this
liberty induced perpetual change, so it is as well to state
here that it does nothing of the kind. Mere arbitrary
divorce is very rare. Permanent attachment is the rule. 581
The basis of the system seems to be that the Taravâd 613
estate is held in trust for the support of the females and
of their descendants in the female line. This trust is 421
placed in the hands of the Kâranavan, the senior male
member of the Taravâd who is the legal guardian of
every member of it, and whose control of the Taravâd
property is absolute. The odd feature in the Marumakkattâyam [604
system is that a man has his nephews about 591
him in the house, and not his sons. He lives in one
house, while his wife and family live in another. That 124]
is, in South Malabar; in North Malabar they live
together.

When we come to consider the degrees of relationship 582
within which marriage is prohibited, we find the rule is 613
that persons descended from a common female ancestor
are not at liberty to marry. Those of the same Taravâd
can never intermarry; but this prohibition does not of
course extend to the children of a brother and a sister,
who are naturally of different Taravâds. Again, the
principle that "no member of the Taravâd of a deceased [587]
wife or husband (is) eligible as the second wife or husband
is true only as far as the woman is concerned; for
a man may marry a woman of his deceased wife's
Taravâd. But he who does this is not in harmony with
social sentiment." We find this observance amongst the
forest Mûppans of Wynâd. In the case of a man's wife
dying, I found that a Mûppan could not take another
wife from her family.

The rule does not interfere with union between the
children (or their descendants) of a brother and sister

582 613 [171] such children belonging of course, under the Marumakkattâyam system, to different Taravâds. We have seen already, when speaking of the Nambûtiris, that this rule of marriage between the children of a brother and sister, never between the children of two brothers or two sisters, is general throughout Southern India. It seems to be common, though there are exceptions, to the Brâhmans and the peoples commonly called Dravidian, with most of whom it is the most fitting marital union.

564 553 585 It will be interesting to add here a note on Sambandham as it is amongst the Akattu Chârna, or Akathithaparisha Nâyars (Akattu inside, parisha class),* by one of themselves. The members of this clan being devoted to indoor services, chiefly writing and casting accounts. To those of the sub-clan attached to the Zamorin who were sufficiently capable to earn it, he gave the titular honour "Mênon," to be used as an affix to the name. The title Mênon is in general hereditary, but, be it remarked, many who now use it are not entitled to do so. Properly speaking only those whose investiture by the Zamorin or some other recognized chief is undisputed, they or their descendants (in the female line of course), may use it. Those invested pay a small fee to the Zamorin. A man known to me was invested with the title Mênon in 1895 by the Karimpuzha chief, who in presence of a large assembly said thrice "From this day forward I confer on Krishnan Nâyar the title of Krishna Mênon." Now-a-days be it said, the title Mênon is used by Nâyars of clans other than the Akattu Chârna. Those who belong to the sub-clan who owe Lordship to the Zamorin look to him even now to settle their caste disputes, and for permission to perform the tâlikettu and other important ceremonies. The ceremony to be described is that of this sub-clan.

564 585 178 As the old order changeth giving place to new in the distribution of the honourable affix "Mênon," so too doth it change even in such an important piece of life as marriage, or what under another name means the same thing amongst the Nâyars. It is truly sad to read of celebration of a Sambandham ceremony at Calicut whereat there was cake and wine for the guests, and (shades of all the departed!) a ring for the bride. The departure from national and therefore rational custom, for adoption of that which is neither custom nor cere-

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* For this note I am indebted to Mr. C. P. Raman Menon, B.A., a prominent Police official of Calicut.

monial when copied meaninglessly, is surely food for 564 585 178 painful reflection.

The ceremony to be described is not one of cake and wine, for the doings of people who have reached that bathos have little interest to the anthropologist, though they may have some to the *observer* of social diversions, but the genuine ceremony as done in orthodox fashion in South Malabar without modern adornment will now be described. My informant says in the first place [582] the man should not enter into Sambandham with a woman until he is 30. Now-a-days, when change is running wild, the man is often much less. In [181 184] North Malabar, which is much more conservative than the south, it was, however, my experience that Sambandham was rare before 27 on the side of the man. And now continue with the Note.* "The Kâra- 585 navan and the women † of his household choose the 564 bride, and communicate their choice to the intending bridegroom through a third party; they may not, dare 613 not speak personally to him in the matter. He approves. The bride's people are informally consulted, and if they [787] agree, the astrologer is sent for and examines the horoscopes of both parties to the intended union. As a matter of course these are found to agree, and the astrologer fixes a day for the Sambandham ceremony. A few days before this takes place two or three women of the bridegroom's house visit the bride, intimating beforehand that they are coming. There they are well treated with food and sweetmeats, and when on the point of leaving they inform the senior female that the bridegroom (naming him) wishes to have Sambandham with—(naming her), and such and such a day is auspicious for the ceremony, the proposal is accepted with pleasure and the party (from the bridegroom's house) returns home."

Preparations for feasting are made in the house of the bride as well as in that of the bridegroom on the appointed day. To the former all relations are invited for [574] the evening, and to the latter a few friends who are much of the same age as the bridegroom (for elders never accompany him) are invited to partake of food at 7 or 8 P.M. and accompany him to the bride's house. After eating they escort him, servants carrying betel leaves (one or two hundred according to the means of the Taravâd),

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* Of which what follows is an abstract.

† My correspondent uses the word "Ladies." I prefer women, a finer word.

585 arecanuts and tobacco, to be given to the bride's household,
564 and which are distributed to the guests. When the
613 bride's house is far away the bridegroom makes his procession
thither from a neighbouring house. Arrived at
[276] the bride's house they sit a while and are again served
with food, after which they are conducted to a room
where betel and other chewing stuff is placed on brass
or silver plates (called thâlam). The chewing over,
sweetmeats are served, and then all go to the bridal
chamber, where the women of the house and others are
assembled with the bride, who, overcome with shyness,
hides herself behind the others. Here again the bridegroom
and his party go through more chewing while
they chat with the women. After a while the men withdraw,
wishing the couple all happiness; and then the
women, departing one by one leave the couple alone, one
of them shutting the door from the outside.

[431] "The Patter Brâhmans always collect on these occasions
and receive small presents (dakshina) of 2 to 4 annas
each, with betel leaf and areca nut from the bridegroom,
sometimes from the bride. A few who are invited
receive their dakshina in the bridal chamber; the others
[513] outside. [In a Nâyar house the sleeping rooms of the
men and women are separate; at different ends of the
[574] house.] Those of the bridegroom's party who live far
away are given sleeping accommodation at the bride's
house, with the men. About daybreak next morning the
bridegroom leaves the house with his party, leaving
under his pillow Rs. 8, 16, 32 or 64, according to his means
but never more than 64, which are intended to cover the
expenses of the wife's household on the ceremony. The
Sambandham is now complete. The girl remains in her
own Taravâd house, and her husband visits her there,
585 coming in the evening and leaving the next morning. A
564 few days after completion of the ceremony the senior
woman of the bridegroom's house sends some cloths,
613 including pavu mundu (superior cloths) and thorthu
602 mundu (towels) and some oil to the bride for her use for
[431] six months. Every six months she does the same, and
on festivals of the Ônam, Vishu; Thiruvathira she sends
[796] besides a little money, areca nut, betel nut and tobacco.
The money sent should amount to Rs. 4, or 8, or 16, or 32,
or 64; either one of these sums. Sums of the higher
numbers are very rarely sent.

"Before long the women of the husband's house express a longing for the girl-wife to be brought to their house, for they have not seen her yet. Again the

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Again the 585
astrologer is requisitioned, and, on the day he fixes, two 564
or three of the women go to the house of the girl-wife, the 613
Ammâyi as they call her (literally "uncle's wife"). They
are well treated, and presently bring away the girl with [781]
them. As she is about to enter the gate house of her
husband's Taravâd, the stile of which she crosses right
leg first, two or three of the women meet her, bearing a
burning lamp and a brass plate (tâlam) and precede her
to the nalukattu of the house. There she is seated on a
mat, and a burning lamp and a nazhi (1 measure) of rice
and some plantains are placed before her. One of the
younger women [married or not I cannot say] takes up a
plantain and puts a piece of it in the Ammâyi's mouth; a
little ceremony called Madhuram Tital, or giving the
sweets for eating. She lives in her husband's house for [431]
a few days and is then sent back to her own with presents, bracelets, rings or cloths, gifts of the senior
women of the house. After this she is at liberty to visit
her husband's house on any day, auspicious or inauspicious.

"In a big Taravâd, where there are many women, the Ammâyi does not, as a rule, disperse sympathy and good will in the household, and if she happens to live temporarily in her husband's house, as is sometimes though very rarely the case in south Malabar, and to be the wife of the Kâranavan, it is observed that she gets, more than her share of whatever good things may
be going; hence the proverb 'Ammâyi Ammayê Kallin- [539]
mel Vechchittu Mattoru Kallu Kondu Nârâyana'—'Place
Ammâyi Amma on a stone and grind her with another stone.'"

Yet one more extract—a reference taken from my 595
notes. The Rev. S. Mateer, author of a well-known book on Travancore, where he resided something over a quarter of a century I think, informed me ten years ago—he was speaking of polyandry amongst the Nâyars of Travancore—that he had "known an instance of 6 brothers keeping 2 women, 4 husbands to one, and 2 to the other. In a case where 2 brothers cohabited with one woman and one was converted to Christianity, the other brother was indignant at the Christian's refusal to live any longer in this condition." I have not known an admitted instance of polyandry amongst the Nâyars of Malabar at the present day, but there is no doubt that if it does not exist now (and I think it does here and there),

595 it certainly did not long ago. Polyandry exists amongst other castes, as we shall see by and by.

58 We must now leave the subject of marriage, which,
611 simple though it is, is like most simple things extremely difficult to describe. The marital relation of the Nâyar is a very natural and simple affair; yet it is the *point d'appuis* of that system of inheritance through women which was once much more common than it is now.

[illegible] Let us hope it will remain unchanged, and that the Nâyar will be able to say always (in his own tongue), with more regard for concrete truth than poetic insight "Das ewig' weibliche ziet uns hinan."

BIRTH: ANTE-NATAL AND AFTER CEREMONIES.

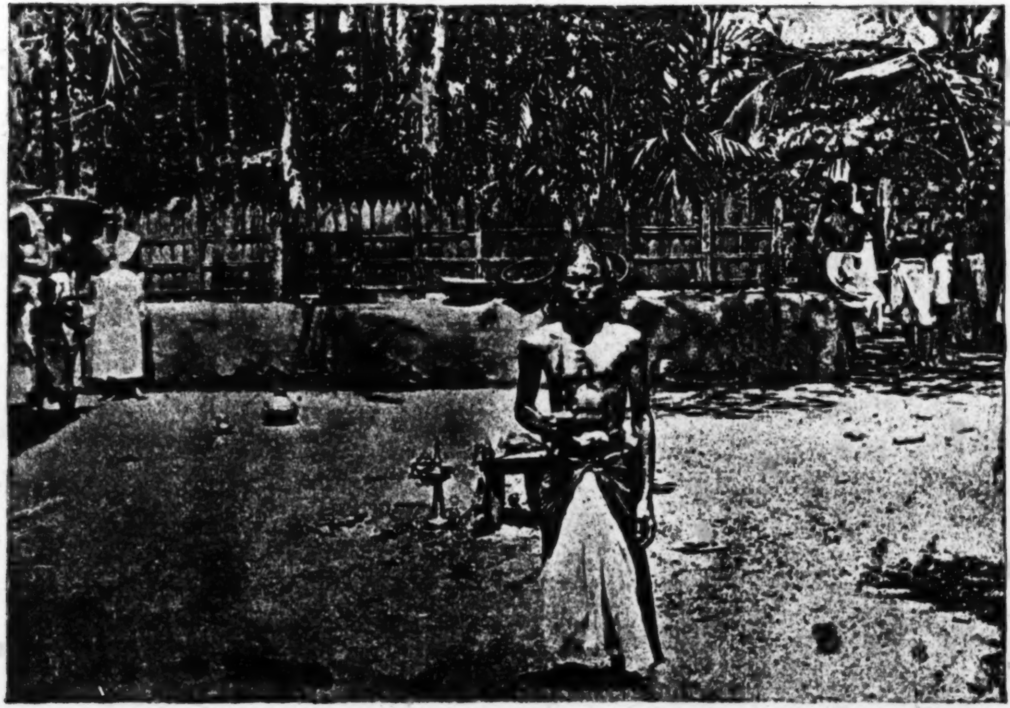
843 The following very interesting note on the ceremonies connected with birth, those preceding it as well as those following it, has been very kindly given by Mr. U. Balakrishnan Nâyar; so I quote his own words:—

"A Nâyar woman has to observe certain ceremonies during pregnancy. First, during and after the seventh
[564] month of pregnancy, she (at least, among the well-to-do
[184] class) bathes, and worships in the temple, every morning;
and eats before her morning meal, a small quantity of butter over which holy *mantrams* have been said by the temple priest or by Nambûtiris. This is generally done till delivery.

843 "*Puli-kuti.*—Another and even more important cere-
mony during pregnancy is the *puli-kuti* (lit., drinking
613 tamarind juice). This is an indispensable ceremony, performed by the rich and poor alike, on a particular day in
[787] the ninth month. The day, nay, even the very hour is
fixed by the local astrologer. The ceremony begins by
[824] the planting of a twig of the *ampasham* tree, on the morn-
ing of the day of the ceremony, in the principal courtyard *(natu-muttom)* of the *Taravâd*. At the appointed hour or *muhurtam*, the pregnant woman, after having bathed and properly attired, is conducted to a particular portion of the house (*vatakini* or northern wing), where she is seated, facing eastwards. The *Ammâyi* or 'uncle's wife,' whose presence on the occasion is essential, goes to the courtyard and plucking a few leaves of the planted twig, squeezes a few drops of its juice into a cup. This she hands over to the brother, if any, of the pregnant woman. It is necessary that the brother should wear a gold ring on his right-hand ring finger. Holding a

6:Fawcett G-5 (ca. 1900)1915
AW11 Kerala AW11
Nayar

PL. XIII.



A VELICHCHAPPAD.

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[Facing P. 242]

country knife *(pissan kathi)* in his left hand, which he 843
directs towards the mouth, he pours the tamarind juice 613
over this knife with his right hand three times, which
dribbles down the knife into her mouth, and she drinks
it. In the absence of a brother, some other near relation
officiates. After she has swallowed the tamarind juice,
she is asked to pick one out of several packets of different
grains placed before her. The grain in the packet
she happens to select is supposed to declare the sex of
the child in her womb. The whole ceremony is wound [574]
up by a sumptuous feast to all the relatives and friends
of the family.

"*After Ceremonies.*—At delivery, women of the barber 846
caste officiate as midwives. In some localities, this duty 564
is performed by *Vêla* caste women. Pollution is observ- 783
ed for fifteen days, and on every day, the mother wears
cloths washed and presented her by a *Vannatti* or woman 613
of the Vannan * caste. On the fifteenth day is the [844]
purificatory ceremony. As in the case of death pollution,
a man of the Atikkurissi clan sprinkles on the woman a [237]
liquid mixture of oil, and the five products of the cow
(*pancha gavya*), with gingelly seeds. Then the woman
takes a plunge-bath and sits on the ground, near the
tank or river. Some woman of the family, with a copper
vessel in her hands, takes water out of the tank or river,
and pours it on the mother's head as many as twenty-one times. (I am not aware if this practice is universal,
though it certainly obtains in parts of South Malabar
and even in North Travancore.) This done, she again
plunges herself in the tank or river, from which she
emerges thoroughly purified.

"It may be noticed that, before the mother proceeds
to purify herself, the new-born babe has also to undergo
some rite of purification. The babe is placed on the
naked floor, and its father or uncle sprinkles a few drops
of cold water on it and takes it in his hands. The [828]
superstitious believe that the temperament of the child
is determined by that of the person who thus sprinkles
the water. All members of the *Taravâd* observe pollution for fifteen days immediately following the delivery,
during which period they are prohibited from entering
temples and holy places. 846

"*First Birthday Celebration.*—The twenty-seventh day 613
after the child's birth or the first recurring day of the
star under which it was born marks the next important 553

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* Over a great part of Malabar she would, however, be of the Tiyan caste.

846
613 event. On this day, the *Kârnavan* of the family gives to
553 the child a spoonful or two of milk, mixed with sugar
[574] and slices of plantain. Then he names the child and calls
it in the ear by the name* three times. This is followed by a feast to all friends and relatives, the expenses of which are necessarily met by the father of the child.

853 "*Chôrûn or First Meal of Rice.*—As is usual with the
852 Nâyar every event is introduced by a ceremonial. The first meal of rice partaken by the child forms no excep-
613 tion to the rule. It must be remembered that the child is not fed on rice for some time after birth; the practice being to give it flour of dried plantain boiled with jaggery. There is a particular variety of plantain, known as *kunnan*, used for this purpose. The staple food of the Malayali, rice, is given the child, for the first time, generally during the sixth month, and is attended,
[787] of course, with some ceremonial. Necessarily, the
astrologer fixes the day; and at the auspicious hour, the child, bathed and adorned with ornaments (which it is the duty of the father to provide) is brought and laid on a plank. A plantain-leaf is spread in front of it and a lighted brass lamp, placed near. On the leaf are† served a small quantity of cooked rice—generally a portion of the rice offered to some temple divinity—some tamarind, salt, chillies, and sugar. Then the *Kâranavan* or the father, ceremoniously approaches and sits down facing the child. First, he puts in the mouth of the child a mixture of the tamarind, chillies and salt; then some rice; and lastly a little sugar.

[301] "Thenceforward, the ordinary food of the child is
rice. It is usual on this occasion for relatives (and especially for the '*bandhus*,' such as the *Ammâyi* or 'uncle's wife') to adorn the child with gold bangles, rings and other ornaments. The *chôrûnû* or rice-giving ceremony is, in some cases, preferably performed in some famous temple, that at Guruvâyûr being a favourite one for this purpose.

844 "*Child-birth—Position during.*—When a Nâyar woman
352 is about to be delivered of a child, she is placed in a reclining position on a low wooden couch (Kottotam), her back supported by a companion, generally an old woman. The kottotam is very like, if not identical with,

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* In some places, the child is named only in the sixth month on the chôrûn day.

† In some places, all the curries, etc., prepared for the attendant feast are also served.

the couch on which the Nâyar has his oil bath. The 844 [352]
surface of it is sloping, the higher end being where the
head is laid, and it is scooped out so as to suit the curvatures of the body lying flat.* Lying on her back, her
head is raised and the thighs are stretched wide apart.
Very often she holds in each hand a rope suspended
from the ceiling, by way of support. The child is [564]
received by a woman of the barber caste."

DEATH AND SUCCEEDING CEREMONIES.

When the dying person is about to embark for that 763
bourne from which no traveller returns, when the breath 613
is about to leave his body, the members of the household, and all friends who may be present, one by one
pour a little water, a few drops from a tiny cup made of
a leaf or two of the tulsi plant, into his mouth, holding
in the hand a piece of gold or a gold ring; the idea being [823]
that the water should touch gold ere it enters the mouth
of the person who is dying. If the Taravâd is rich
enough to afford it, a small gold coin, (a Râsi fanam, if
one can be procured †) is placed in the mouth, and the
lips are closed. As soon as death has taken place, the 764
corpse is removed from the cot or bed, and carried to the 613
vatakkini (a room in the northern end of the house) [824]
where it is placed on long plantain leaves spread out on
the floor; and while it is in this room, whether by day or [354]
by night, a lamp is kept burning, and one member of the
Taravâd holds the head in his lap and another the feet
in the same way; and here the neighbours come to take
a farewell look at the dead.

As the Malayâlis believe that disposal of a corpse by
cremation or burial as soon as possible after death is conducive to the happiness of the spirit of the departed, no
time is lost in setting about the funeral. The bodies of
senior members of a Taravâd, male or female, are burned;
those of children under two are buried; so too are the [766]
bodies of all persons who have died of cholera or smallpox.‡ When preparations for the funeral have been [351]
made, the corpse is removed to the natumuttam or
central yard of the house if there is one (there always is

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* Every Nâyar, and for the matter of that, every Malayali, has an oil [515]
bath about once a week or as often as he can afford. The person is well
shampooed with gingelly oil.

† These are now rare.

‡ It is the same amongst the Khonds of Ganjam.

764
613 in the larger houses), and, if there is not, is taken to the
[351] front yard where it is again laid on plantain leaves. It
is washed and anointed, the usual marks are made with
sandalwood paste and ashes as in life, and it is neatly
clothed. There is then done what is called the Pota-
vekkuka ceremony or placing new cotton cloths (kóti
mundu) over the corpse by the senior member of the
(deceased's) Taravâd followed by all the other members,
also sons-in-law and daughters-in-law, and all relatives.
These cloths are used for tying up the corpse when being
taken to the place of burial or cremation. In some parts
[184] of Malabar the corpse is carried on a bier made of fresh
bamboos, tied up in these cloths, while in others it is
carried (well covered in the cloths) by hand. In either
[284] case it is carried by the relatives. Before the corpse is
removed there is done another ceremony called Para
Virakkuka (filling up pâras—a pâra is a measure nearly
as big as a gallon). All adult male members of the
Taravâd take part in it under the direction of a
man of the Atikkurissi clan (who occupies the position
of director of the ceremonies during the next fifteen
days, receiving as his perquisite all the rice and other
offerings made to the deceased's spirit). It consists in
filling up three pâra measures with paddy, and one
edangâli ($\frac{1}{10}$ of a pâra) with raw rice. These offerings of
paddy and rice are placed very near the corpse, together with a (burning) lamp of the kind commonly used
in Malabar, called nela villâku. If the Taravâd is rich
enough to afford one, a silk cloth is placed over the
corpse before removal for cremation.

As much fuel as is necessary having been got ready at the place of cremation, a small pit about the size of the corpse is dug, and across this are placed three long stumps of the plantain tree, one at each end, one in the middle; on which as a foundation the pyre is laid. The whole, or at least a part of the wood used should be that of the mango tree. As the corpse is being removed to the pyre, the senior Anandravan * who is next in age (junior) to the deceased, tears from one of the new cloths laid on the corpse a piece sufficient to go round his waist, ties it round his waist, and holds in his hand, or tucks into his cloth at the waist a piece of iron, generally a

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* The eldest male member of the Malabar Taravâd is called the Kâranavan, as noted already (Bulletin, Vol. III, No. 1); all male members, brothers, nephews and so on, who are junior to him are called Anandravans of the Taravâd.

long key. This individual is throughout *chief* among the 764 613 offerers of "pindam" (balls of rice) to the deceased.

The corpse is laid on the bier, with the head to the south, with the fuel laid over it and a little camphor, sandalwood and ghee, if these things are within the means of the Taravâd. Here must be stated the in- [561] variable rule that no member of the Taravâd, male or female, who is older than the deceased shall take any part whatever in the ceremony, or in any subsequent ceremony following on the cremation or burial. All adult males junior to the deceased should be present when the pyre is lighted. The deceased's younger brother, or, if there is none surviving, his nephew (his sister's eldest son), sets fire to the pyre at the head of the corpse. If the deceased left a son, this son sets fire at the same time to the pyre at the feet of the corpse. In the case of the deceased being a woman, her son sets fire to the pyre; failing a son the next (junior) in age to her has the right to do it. It is a matter of great importance that the whole pyre burns at once: the greatest care is taken that it burns as a whole, consuming every part of the corpse. While the corpse is being consumed, all the members of the deceased's Taravâd who carried it to the pyre go and bathe in a tank (there is always one in the compound or garden around every Nâyar's house): the eldest, he who bears the piece of torn cloth and the piece of iron (the key), carries an earthen pot of water, and all return together to the place of cremation. It should be said that on the news of a death the neighbours assemble, assisting in digging the grave, preparing the pyre, and so on, and, while the members of the Taravâd go and bathe, those remain near the corpse. By the time the relatives return it is almost consumed by the fire, and the senior Anandravan carries the pot of water thrice round the pyre, letting the water leak out by making holes in the pot as he walks round. On completing the third round, he dashes the pot on the ground close by where the head of the dead had been placed. A small image of the [532] deceased is then made out of raw rice * representing the deceased, and to this image a few grains of rice and [782] gingelly seeds are offered. When this has been done [515] the relatives go home and the neighbours depart, bathing before entering their houses.

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* The ceremony is called Veli Unka (?).

765 When the cremation has been done by night, the duty
782 of Sêshakriya (making offerings to the deceased's spirit)
613 must be begun the next day between 10 and 11 A.M. and is done on seven consecutive days. In any case the time for this ceremony is after 10 and before 11 and it continues for seven days. It is performed as follows. All male members of the Taravâd younger than the deceased go together to a tank and bathe, *i.e.*, they souse themselves in the water, and return to the house. The eldest of them, the man who tore off the strip of cloth from the corpse, has with him the same strip of cloth and the piece of iron, and all assemble in the central courtyard of the house, where there has been placed ready by an Enangan—(one of the Taravâd—of the same clan or sub-clan as that of
[582] the deceased : marriage must be admissible between the two Taravâds)—some rice which has been half boiled, a few grains of gingelly, a few leaves of the cherûla,* some curds, a smaller measure † of paddy, and a smaller measure ‡ of raw rice. These are placed in the north-east corner with a lamp of the ordinary Malabar pattern. A piece of palmyra leaf, about a foot or so in length and the width of a finger, is taken, and one end of it knotted; the knotted end is placed in the ground, and the long end is left sticking up. This represents the deceased. The rice
824 and other things are offered to this. The belief concern-
826 ing this piece of palmyra leaf is explained thus : There
764 are in the human body ten humours :—Vâyús ; Prânan ;
774 Apânan ; Samânan ; Udânan; Vyânan ; Nâgan ; Kûrman; Krikalan ; Dêvadattan ; Dhananjayan. These are called Dasaváyu, *i.e.*, ten airs. When cremation was done for the first time, all these excepting the last, were destroyed
[789] by the fire. The last one flew up and settled on a palmyra leaf. Its existence was discovered by some Brâhman sages who, by means of mantrams (magic), forced it down
[782] to a piece of palmyra leaf on the earth. So it is thought
[775] that, by making offerings to this (Dhananjayan) leaf for seven days, the spirit of the deceased will be mollified, should he have any anger to vent on the living members of the Taravâd.

824 The place where the piece of leaf is to be fixed has
765 been cleaned carefully, and the leaf is fixed in the centre
782 of this prepared surface. The offerings made to it go direct
613

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[804]

* Ærna lanata belonging to the natural order Acanthaceæ.

† Ari Edangâli : about the size of a quart.

‡ A nazhi : about ½ a pint.

to the spirit of the deceased, and the peace of theTaravâd 824
is ensured. The men who have bathed and returned have 765
brought with them, plucked on their way back to the 782
house, some grass (karuka pullu): they kneel in front of 613
the piece of palmyra, with the right knee on the ground. Some of the grass is spread on the ground near the piece of leaf, and rings made with it are placed on the ring finger of the right hand by each one present. The first offerings consist of water, sandalwood paste and leaves of the cherîla: the eldest of the Anandravans leading the way. Boys need not go through the actual performance of offerings; it suffices for them to touch the eldest as he is making his offerings. The half-boiled rice is made into balls (pindams) and each one present takes one of these in his right hand and places it on the grass near the piece of palmyra leaf. Some gingelly seeds are put into the curd, which is poured so as to make three rings round the pindams. It is poured out of a small cup made with the leaf on which the half-boiled rice had been placed. It should not be poured from any other kind of vessel. The whole is then covered with this same plantain leaf, some lighted wick is waved, and some milk is put under the leaf. It is undisturbed for some moments, and the leaf is tapped gently with the back of the fingers of the right hand. The leaf is then removed and torn in two at its midrib, one piece being placed on either side of the pindams. The ceremony is then over for the day. The performers rise, and remove the wet clothing they have been wearing.

The eldest of the Anandravans should, it was omitted to mention, be kept somewhat separated from the other Anandravans while in the courtyard, and before the corpse
is removed for cremation; a son-in-law or a daughter-in- [764]
law, or some such kind of relation remaining, as it were, [607]
between him and them. He has had the piece of cloth torn from the covering of the corpse tied round his waist, and he has had the piece of iron (usually a key) in the folds of his cloth, or stuck in his waist during the ceremony which has just been described. Now, when it has been completed, he ties the piece of cloth to the pillar of the house nearest to the piece of palmyra leaf which has been stuck in the ground, and puts the piece of iron in a safe place. The piece of palmyra leaf is covered with a basket. It is uncovered every day for seven days at the same hour, while the same ceremony is repeated. The balls of rice (pindams) are removed by women and girls of the Taravâd who âre junior to the deceased. They

824
765 place them in the bell-metal vessel in which the rice was
boiled. The senior places the vessel on her head, and
782 leads the way to a tank, on the banks of which the rice is
613 thrown. It is hoped that crows will come and eat it; for
[775] if they do, the impression is received that the deceased's
spirit is pleased with the offering; but if somehow it is
[825] thought that the crows will not come and eat it, the rice is
[231] thrown into the tank. Dogs are not to be allowed to eat it.
The women bathe after the rice has been thrown away.

765 When the ceremony which has been described has
been performed for the seventh time, *i.e.*, on the seventh day
613 after death, the piece of palmyra leaf is removed from the
574 ground, and thrown on the ashes of the deceased at the
783 place of cremation. During these seven days no member
[824] of the Taravâd goes to any other house. The house of the
dead and all its inmates are under pollution: no outsider
enters it but under ban of pollution, which is, however,
removable by bathing. A visitor entering the house of
the dead during these seven days must bathe before he
can enter his own house. During these seven days the
Kâranavan of the family receives visits of condolence
from relatives and friends to whom he is "at home" on
Monday, Wednesday or Saturday. They sit and chat,
chew betel and go home, bathing ere they enter their
houses.

[184] It is said that in some parts of Malabar the visitors
[431] bring with them small presents in money or kind to help
the Kâranavan through the expenditure to which the
funeral rites necessarily put him.

765 To hark back a little, it must not be omitted that on
the third day after the death, all those who are related by
613 marriage to the Taravâd of the deceased combine and
give a good feast to the inmates of the house and to the
neighbours, who are invited, one man or one woman from
each house. The person so invited is expected to come.
This feast is called Patni Karigi. On the seventh day a
return feast will be given by the Taravâd of the deceased
to all relatives and neighbours.

Between the seventh and fourteenth day after death no
[783] ceremony is observed; but the members of the Taravâd
remain under death pollution, and then on the fourteenth
day comes the Sanchayanam. It is the disposal of the
calcined remains; the ashes of the deceased. The male
members of the Taravâd go to the place of cremation and,
picking up the pieces of unburnt bones which they find
there, place these in an earthen pot which has been
sun-dried—not burnt by fire in the usual way—cover up

the mouth of this pot with a piece of new cloth, and, all 765
following the eldest who carries it, proceed to the nearest 613
river (it must be running water), which receives the
remains of the dead. The men then bathe and return
home. In some parts of Malabar the bones are collected
on the seventh day, but it is not orthodox to do so. Better [778]
by far than taking the remains to the nearest river is it
to take them to some specially sacred place, Benares,
Gâya, Ramêsvaram, or even to some place of sanctity
much nearer home, as to Tirunelli in Wynâd, and there
dispose of them in the same manner. The bones or
ashes of any one having been taken to Gâya and there
deposited in the river, the survivors of the Taravâd have
no need to continue the annual ceremony for that person.
This is called "Ashtagâya Shraddham." It puts an end
to the need for all earthly ceremonial. It is believed that
the collection and careful disposal of the ashes of the
dead gives peace to his spirit, and, what is more important,
the pacified spirit will not thereafter injure the living
members of the Taravâd, cause miscarriage to the women,
possess the men (as with an evil spirit), and so on.

Then on the fifteenth day after death is the purificatory 765
ceremony. Until this has been done, any one touched 613
by any member of the Taravâd should bathe before he 783
enters his house or partakes of any food. A man of the [564]
Athikkurisi clan officiates. He sprinkles milk oil in
which have been put some gingelly seeds (all together)
over the persons of those under pollution. This sprinkling [465]
and the bath which follows it removes the death pollution.
The purifier receives a fixed remuneration for his office on
this occasion, as well as when there is a birth in the
Taravâd.

In the case of death of a senior member of a Taravâd, 554
well-to-do and reckoned as of some importance, there is 621
the feast called Pinda Atiyantaram on the sixteenth day 765
after death, given to the neighbours and friends. The
word neighbours, as used here, does not mean those who
live close by, but, owing to the custom of Malabar under
which each house is in its own paramba (garden or
enclosure) which may be a large one, those of the caste
living within a considerable area round about. I am not
sure whether in connection with these ceremonies there is
mutual assistance in preparation for the funeral; or
whether there is any recognized obligation between
members of the same amsham, dêsam or tara; or whether
this kind of mutual obligation obtains generally between
any Taravâd and those of caste round about, irrespective
of s-a boundaries,

765 of boundaries. With the observance of the Pinda Atiyantaram or feast of pindams, there is involved the Dîkṣha, or leaving the entire body unshaved for 41 days, or for a year. There is no variable limit between 41 days [184] or a year. Forty-one days is permissible as the period for the Dîkṣha, but a year is correct. The 41-day period is the rule in North Malabar.

[593] I have seen many who were under the Dîksha for a year. He who lets his hair grow may be a son or nephew 604 of the deceased. One member only of the Taravâd bears [302] the mark of mourning by his growth of hair, remarkable enough in Malabar where every one as a rule, excepting the Mâppila Muhammadans (and they shave their heads), shaves his face, head (except the patch on the crown) chest and arms, or at any rate his wrists. He who is under the Dîkṣha offers half-boiled rice and gingelly seeds to the spirit of the decased every morning after [784] his bath; and he is under restriction from women, from alchoholic drinks, and from chewing betel, also tobacco. When the Dîkṣha is observed, the ashes of the dead are not deposited as described already (in the sun-dried vessel) until its last day—the forty-first or a year after death. When it is carried on for a year there is observed every month a ceremony called * Bali. It is noteworthy [821] that, in this monthly ceremony and for the conclusion of the Dîkṣha, it is not the thirtieth or three hundred and [805] sixty-fifth day which marks the date for the ceremonies, but it is the day (of the month) of the star which was presiding when the deceased met his death: the returning day on which the star presides.

793 For the * Bali, a man of the Elâyatu caste officiates. 564 It has been said already ("Nambûtiri Brâhmans": Bulletin, Vol. III, No. I), that the Elâyatus are priests for 765 the Nâyars. They wear the Brâhman's thread, but they are not Brâhmans. They are not permitted to study the Vêdas, but to the Nâyars they stand in the place of the ordinary Purôhit. The officiating Elâyatu prepares the rice for the Vêli when the deceased, represented by Karuka grass, is offered boiled rice, curds, gingelly seeds and some other things. The Elâyatu should be paid a rupee for his services, which are considered necessary even when the man under Dîkṣha himself is familiar with the required ceremonial.

765 The last day of the Dîksha is one of festivity. After 603 the * Bali the man under Dîkṣha is shaved. All this over

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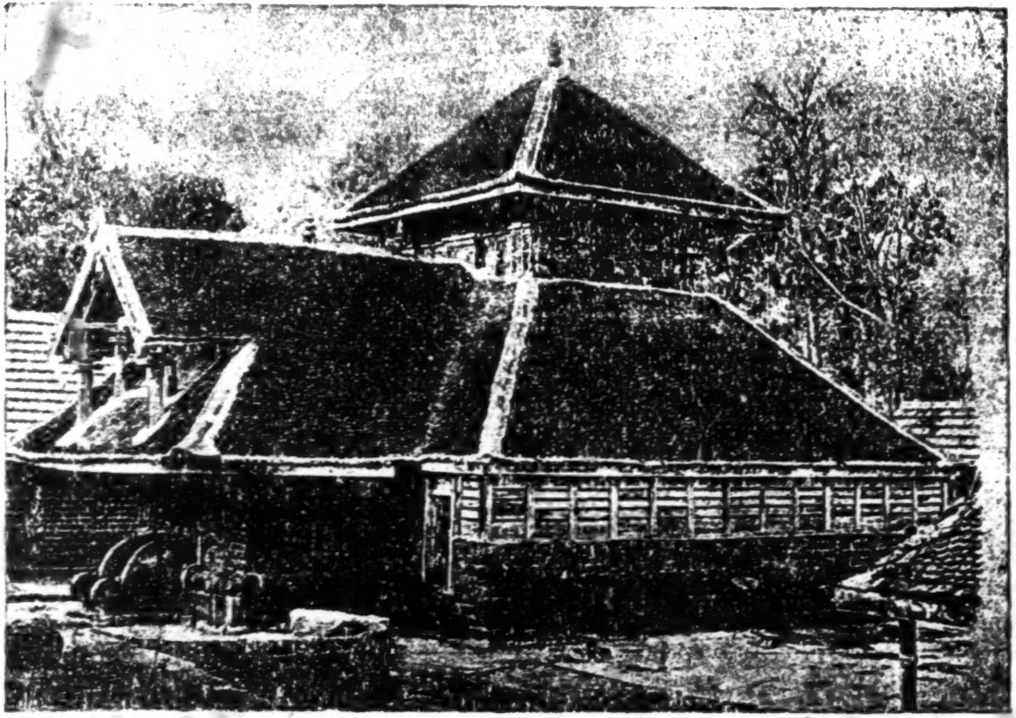
* Or Bâli.

6:Fawcett G-5 (ca. 1900)1915
AW11 Kerala AW11
Nayar

PL. XIII.

[Facing P.252]



BHAGAVATI TEMPLE, PANDALUR.

346

All this over

the only thing to be done for the deceased is the annual 769
shraddham, or yearly funeral commemorative rite. Rice
balls (pindams) are made and given to crows. Clapping [825]
of hands announces to these birds that the rice is being
thrown for them, and, should they come at once and eat
it, it is obvious that the spirit of the deceased is pleased
with the offering, and is not likely to be troublesome.
But, on the other hand, should they not come and eat, it
is evident that the spirit is displeased, and the Taravâd
had better look out.

The ceremonial connected with the funeral rites which 771
have been described, illustrates the immense difference
which exists, as it does in the case of all peoples more or
less cultured, between the primitive belief of the race, and
the higher, the more abstract, religion which they believe
they believe. With races, as with children, the earliest
associations are the strongest, and persist through the life
of the race as through the life of the individual. The
higher power of reasoning which comes with higher
development does not disperse them altogether. The 775
people who practise these rites are good Hindus, and,
according to the theory of their Hindu religion, the spirit
which is emancipated from the body at death at once
inhabits another body, for suffering or for enjoyment
measured by the deserts of the bodily existence which
has just ceased. This is the higher religion. And yet
they admit that the spirit is connected with the shadow, [822]
not with the breath;—and feel in their hearts that it still [782]
lingers in the house and absorbs the essence of the
ingredients of the food offered to it; that it must be
propitiated or it will cause harm to the living. This is the
primitive religion. It is supposed that the spirits of those
whose ashes are deposited at Benares or other place of
sanctity, and for whose sake alms are given to Brâhmans,
remain at those holy spots, and become more and more
god-like. This is a mixture of both. We are here
concerned with facts rather than theories and, as much
has been said already of this side of the subject of
comparative religions, we may proceed with our facts.
The spirits of those who have committed suicide or met [766]
death by any violent means are always particularly vicious
and troublesome to the Taravâd, their spirit possessing [613]
and rendering miserable some unfortunate member
of it. Unless pacified they will ruin the Taravâd, so [782]
Brâhman priests are called in and appease them by means
of Tilahômam, a rite in which sacrifical fire is raised, and
ghee, gingelly and other things are offered through it.

RELIGION.

771 It will be easier to convey a rational conception of the religion of the Nâyars, not by what is written but by what is left out; so we will proceed on this plan. The ceremonies connected with marriage and death go far towards indicating what are their religious ideas in [181] general. The conservative character of the people of Malabar whose country is an earthly paradise, severed from the major portion of the Indian peninsula by the high mountains of the Western Ghâts, secure in its happy seclusion, where Nature has lavished her gifts with the prodigality of a Bacchante, prepares us for finding much of the primitive element in their religion. With the more uncultivated, the wilder races, this is almost entirely primitive in character; no more the cult of a Siva or Vishnu than of Sqaktktquaclt.

As has been remarked already ("Nambûtiris" Bulletin, Vol. III, No. I), we see in Malabar the most undiluted form of the highest, the most abstract religion of Southern India, side by side with the most entirely primitive. The Nâyars have much of both.

The saying, "cleanliness is next to godliness," is one of those which contain much more real wisdom than is usually apprehended. The world is really divided, as I think Mr. Havelock Ellis points out, between the dirty and the clean; and, if I err not, the same author tells us that clothed man cannot be truly clean. Man has advanced far in development when he has become a clean animal. Now the Nâyars' religion is one of cleanliness, undiminished by superabundant clothing. Men and [291] women can scarcely wear less than they do in compatibility with the received ideas of decency and propriety, [515] nor can they be more scrupulous in the matter of personal [264] cleanliness. No Nâyar, unless one utterly degraded by the exigencies of a Government office, would eat his food without having bathed and changed his cloth. It is a rule seldom broken that every Nâyar goes to the temple to pray at least once a day after having bathed; generally [783] twice a day. The mere approach anywhere near his vicinity of a Cheruman, a Polayan or any inferior being, even a Tîyan, as he walks to his house from the temple, cleansed in body and mind, his marks newly set on his forehead with sandalwood paste, is pollution, and he must turn and bathe again ere he can enter his house 683 564 783 and eat. Buchanan tells us that in his time, about 99 years ago, the man of inferior caste thus approaching

683

the Nâyar would be cut down instantly with a sword: 564
there would be no words. Now that the people of India 783
are inconvenienced with an Arms Act which inhibits [656]
sword play of this kind, and with a law-system under
which high and low are rated alike, the Nâyar has to [178]
content himself with an imperious grunt-like shout for
the way to be cleared for him as he stalks on unperturbed. [201]
His arrogance is not diminished, but he cannot now show
it in quite the same way.

Doubtless the natural habit of seclusion common to 771
Malabar, rendered easy by the wealth of vegetation of
which those who have never visited shores somewhat
alike climatically can have no conception, has favoured
the persistence of earlier forms of belief; but, whatever
may be the reason for it, there is much more of the
extremes of religious belief to be seen amongst the
Nâyars than amongst any other people or caste of
Southern India.

It has been noticed already how that the Malayalis [795]
have, practically, no sects such as obtain throughout the
rest of Southern India. Vishnu, Siva, Bhagavati, Rama—
all these names of the Hindu theogony are meaningless
to them. They do not know one from the other except in
name. Their Hinduism is not that of the rest of Southern India.

It is time to come to concrete example, so I will 796
attempt a description of the ceremonial observed at the
Pishâri kâvu—the Pishâri temple near Quilandy on the [773]
coast 15 miles north of Calicut, where Bhagavati is supposed
in vague legend to have slain an Asura or
gigantic ogre, in commemoration of which event the
festival is held yearly to Bhagavati and her followers.
It is fairly representative. The deity of the temple [776]
Bhagavati is spoken of as feminine in the spirit of accuracy,
but it is extremely unlikely whether ten per cent.
of the crowd even thought of sex in connection with
Bhagavati. Sacrifice of goats as part of the ceremonial [782]
was at first denied: it is a mystery too awful to be the
subject of conversation. At the same time, I am inclined
to think that much the weighter reason is that the priests
who cling to this part of the ceremonial are ashamed to
let it be known to the people that they do it. They like
it to be thought that such sacrifice is appropriate to the
inferior races, but that *they* are above it and have nothing
to do with it!

The festival lasts for seven days. When I visited it
in 1895 the last day was on the 31st of March. Before

796 Before
[793] day-break of the first day the ordinary temple priests, a
Mûssad, will leave the temple after having swept up
and made it clean; and (before day-break also) five
Nambûtiris will enter it, bearing with them "Sudhi
796 Kalasam." The Kalasam is on this occasion made of the
778 five products of the cow, *i.e.* (panchagavyam) together
[237] with some water, a few leaves of the banyan tree (Arayâl)
and Darbha grass, all in one vessel. Before being
brought to the temple, mantrams or magic verses will
[783] have been said over it. The contents of the vessel are
sprinkled all about the temple, and a little is put in the
well, thus purifying the temple and the well. The
Nambûtiris will then perform the usual morning worship,
and either immediately after it or very soon afterwards
they leave the temple, and the Mûssad, the ordinary
[613] priest, returns and resumes his office. The temple belongs
to four Taravâds, and no sooner has it been purified than
the Kâranavans of these four Taravâds, virtually the
joint-owners of the temple (known as Urâlas) present to
the temple servant (known as a Pishârodi) the silver flag
of the temple which has been in the custody of one of
them since the last festival. The Pishârodi receives it
and hoists it in front of the temple (to the east), thus
signifying that the festival has begun. While this is
being done, emphasis and grandeur is given to the occa-
[201] sion by the firing off of miniature mortars such as are
common at all South Indian festivals; and, after the
[411] flag is hoisted, there are hoisted all round the temple
small flags of coloured cloth. For the next few days
[788] there is nothing particular to be done beyond the pro-
cession morning, noon and night; the image of Bhaga-
vati being carried on an elephant to an orchestra of
drums, and cannonade of the little mortars. All those
who are present are supposed to be fed from the temple.
796 There is a large crowd. On the morning of the fifth day
564 a man of the washerman (he is also a tailor: Vannân)
caste will announce to the neighbours by beat of tom-tom
that there will be made a procession of Bhagavati issuing
[202] from the gates of the temple and passing round about.
Like all those who are in any way connected with the
[188] temple, this man's office is hereditary and he lives to a
small extent on the bounty of the temple, *i.e.*, he holds a
[425] little land on nominal terms from the temple property, in
consideration for which he must fulfil certain require-
ments for the temple as on occasions of festivals. His
office also invests him with certain rights in the com-
munity. The Vannân has, I believe, immense power

indirectly, in the matter of giving or not giving new 796
cloths to women after menstruation, but my information 564
on the point is incomplete. Each receives from the
temple daily during the festival a fixed quantity of rice,
and their families are fed. Thus the tailor, the goldsmith, [294]
and the blacksmith, are under obligation to work [326]
as it may be required for the temple without remuneration
in the ordinary way of labour, but for the honour only.

In the afternoon of the same day (the fifth) the Vannân
and a Manûtan, the one following the other and not together,
bring two umbrellas to the temple ; Vannân bringing [293]
one of cloth, the other one of cadjan. I am not sure whether the cloth umbrella has been in possession of the Vannân, but think it has. At all events, when he now brings it to the temple it is in thorough repair, a condition for which he is responsible. The cadjan umbrella is a new one. Following these two as they walk solemnly, each with his umbrella, is a large crowd. There are the usual processions of Bhagavati on the elephant, encircling the temple thrice in the morning, at noon and at night. Nothing more is done on this day.

Early on the sixth day the headman of the Mukkuvans 796
(fisherman), who by virtue of his headship is called the
'Arayân,' together with the blacksmith and the goldsmith 326
comes to the temple followed by an interested crowd, 226
but accompanied by no orchestra of drums. To the 564
Arayân is given half a sack of rice for himself and his followers, a silver umbrella belonging to the temple is handed over to him to be used when he comes to the temple again in the evening. To the blacksmith is given the temple sword. The goldsmith receives the silver umbrella from the Arayân, and excutes on it any repairs that may be needful ; and in like manner the blacksmith looks to the sword.

In the afternoon the headman of the Tiyans called 796
the "Tandân," comes to the temple followed by two of 564
his castemen carrying slung on a pole over their shoulders [782]
three bunches of young cocoanuts, an appropriate
offering, the Tiyans being those whose ordinary profession [482]
is climbing the cocoanut palm, drawing the toddy, securing the cocoanuts, etc. This time there will be loud drumming and a large crowd with the Tandân, and in front of him are men dancing about, imitating sword play with sticks and shields, clanging the shields, pulling at bows as if firing off imaginary arrows, the while
shouting and yelling *madly*. The sticks represent swords. [326]
Then come the blackmith and the goldsmith with the

796 564 sword. The goldsmith has some responsibility connected [326] with the sword, perhaps on account of its ornamentation, although the ordinary Malayali blacksmith is quite equal to the ordinary work of a goldsmith as well as repairing clocks and watches. Following comes the Arayân with the silver umbrella to an accompaniment of very noisy drumming; he and his umbrella in great state under a canopy of red cloth held lengthways by two men, one before, one behind. The procession of Bhagavati continues throughout the night, and ceases at day-break. These six days of the festival are called Vilakku.

796 534 A word about the drumming. The number of instrumentalists increases as the festival goes on, and on the last day I counted over fifty, all Nâyars. The instruments were the ordinary tom-tom, a skin stretched tight over one side of a circular wooden band, about 1½ feet in diameter and 2 or 3 inches in width, and the common long drum much narrower at the ends than in the middle, and there were (I think) a few of those narrow in the middle, something like an hour-glass cut short at both ends. They are beaten with drum-sticks, curved, not straight, thicker at the end held in the hand. The [533] accuracy with which they were played on, never a wrong stroke, was truly amazing, although the rhythm was being changed perpetually; and their crescendo and diminuendo, from a perfect fury of wildness to the gentlest pianissimo, was equally astonishing, especially when we consider the fact that there was no visible leader of this strange orchestra.

Early on the seventh and last day, when the morning procession is over, there comes to the temple a man of the Pânan* caste. He carries a small cadjan umbrella which he has made himself, adorned all round the edges with a fringe of the young leaves of the cocoanut palm. His approach is heralded and noised just as in the case of the others on the previous day. The umbrella he brings should have a long handle and with this umbrella in his hand he performs a dance before the temple. The [293] Malabar umbrella has a very long handle as a rule, in fact the correct way to carry an umbrella is with the end of the handle resting in the hand while the arm is straight at the side.

[346] The temple which is figured in the plate[1] is situated within a hollow square enclosure, which none in caste

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* Pânan, a caste numerically small, and inferior. They make umbrellas of cadjan and perform at temples.

[1] [See plate XII, facing p. 252, Category 116--Analyst]

796
below the Nâyar is permitted to enter. To the north, 564
south, east, and west, there is a level entrance into this [346]
hollow square, and beyond this entrance no man of
inferior caste may go. The Pânan receives a certain
quantity, about 10 lb. of raw rice for his performance.

In the afternoon a small crowd of Vettuvars come to [411]
the temple carrying with them swords, not very dangerous
ones, and about ten small baskets made of cocoanut palm [263]
leaves, containing salt.* These baskets are carried
slung on a pole as before. These men dance and shout [482]
in much excitement, cutting their heads with their own [786]
swords in their frenzy. Some of them represent devils
or some kind of inferior evil spirits, and dance madly,
under the influence of these spirits which they represent.
Then comes the Arayân as on the previous day with his
little procession, and lastly comes the blacksmith with
the sword.

It is explained by the Malayalis that the individuals [294]
of the various castes who hold the office of tailor, gold-
smith and so on to the temple, do so, not for the sake of [326]
what they receive from the temple, but in order to mark
their position of superiority in their caste. The cere-
monial allotted to each also no doubt marks his position
in the ladder of caste.

The procession in the evening of this the seventh and 796
last day is a great affair. Eight elephants which kept [231]
line beautifully, took part in this when I witnessed it.
One of them very handsomely caparisoned had on its
back a priest (Mûssad) carrying a sword smothered in [778]
garlands of red flowers representing the goddess. Up to
this time, when she is represented by a sword, it will be
remembered she has been represented by an image. The
elephant bearing the priest with the sword is bedizened
on the forehead with two golden discs, one on each side of
the forehead, and over the centre of the forehead
hangs a long golden ornament.† He bears other jewels,
and over his back is a large canopy-like red cloth richly
wrought. Before the elephant walked a Nâyar carrying [411]
in his right hand in front of him a sword of the kind

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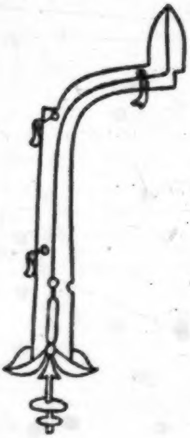
* The use of salt here is obscure as to the purpose. I remember a case [685]
of a Nâyar's house having been plundered, the idol was knocked down and [578]
salt was put in the place where it should have stood. The act was looked
on as most insulting.

† The discs on the elephant's forehead are common in Malabar in affairs of ceremony. The Mappila poets are very fond of comparing a beautiful girl's breast to these cup-like discs.

796
411 called nândakam smeared with white (probably sandalwood) paste. The shape of this sword is given in the illustration. To its edge, at intervals of a few inches, are fastened tiny bells, so that, when it is shaken, there is a general jingle.



796
564 But just before the procession begins there is something for the Tîyans to do. Four men of this caste, having with them Pûkkalasams (flower-kalasams) and five having with them Jannakalasams (?) run along the west, north, and east, sides of the temple (outside the enclosure) shouting and making a noise more like the barking of dogs than anything else. The [273] kalasams contain arrack which is presently given to the temple to be used in the ceremonies. Members of certain families
[465] only are allowed to perform in this business, and for what they do each man receives five edangâlis of rice from the temple and a small piece of the flesh of the goat to be
[264] sacrificed later. These nine men eat only once a day during the festival; they do no work, remaining quietly
[834] at home unless when at the temple; they cannot approach any one of caste lower than their own; they cannot
[841] cohabit with women; and they cannot see a women in menstruation during these days. A crowd of Tîyans join more or less in this, rushing about and barking like dogs, making a hideous noise. They too have kalasams, and, when they are tired of rushing and barking, they drink the arrack in them. These men are always under vow.
[782] In doing what they do, they fulfil their vow for the benefit they have already received from the goddess—cure from sickness as a rule.
796
564 To the west of the temple is a circular pit—it was called the fire-pit, but there was no fire in it—and this pit all the Tîyan women of the neighbourhood circumambulate, passing from west round by north, three times, holding on the head a pewter plate on which are a little rice, bits of plantain leaves and cocoanut, and a burning wick. As each women completes her third round, she stands for a moment at the western side, facing east, and throws the contents of the plate into the

pit, then goes to the western gate of the enclosure, and 796
puts down her plate for an instant while she makes 564
profound salaam to the goddess ere going away.

And now the procession starts out from the temple, 796
issuing from the northern gate, and for a moment con- 776
fronts a being so strange that he demands description.
Of the many familiar demons of the Malayalis the two 536
most intimate are "Kuttichchâttan" and "Gulikan," who are supposed to have assisted Kâli (who is scarcely the Kâli of Brâhmanism by the by) in overcoming the Asura, and on the occasion of this festival these two demons dance before her. "Gulikan" is represented by the Vannân and "Kuttichchâttan" by the Manûtan who have been mentioned already, and who are under like restrictions with the nine Tîyans. I saw poor "Gulikan" being made up, the operation occupying five or six hours or more before his appearance. I asked who he was and was told he was "a devil." He looked mild enough; but then his "make up" had just begun. He was lying flat on the ground close by the northern entrance of the enclosure, where presently he was to dance, a man painting his face to make it hideous and frightful. This done, his hair was dressed; large bangles were put on his arms, covering them almost completely from the shoulder to the wrist; his head and neck was swathed and decorated; a wooden platform arrangement from which hung a red ornamented skirt was fastened to his hips; there was fastened to his back an elongated Prince of Wales's feathers arrangement (made of plank) the top of which reached five feet above his head; and he was made to look like nothing human. Kuttichchâttan was treated in much the same manner.

As the procession issues from the northern gate of the temple where it is joined by the elephants, Gulikan stands in the northern entrance of the enclosure (which he cannot enter), facing it, and a halt is made for three minutes, while Gulikan dances. The poor old man who represented this fearful being, grotesquely terrible in his wonderful metamorphosis, must have been extremely glad when his three minutes' dance, preparation for which occupied all the afternoon, was concluded, for the mere weight and uncomfortable arrangement of his paraphernalia must have been extremely exhausting. It was with difficulty that he moved at all, let alone dance.

The procession passes round by east, where, at the entrance of the enclosure, Kuttichchâttan gives his dance,

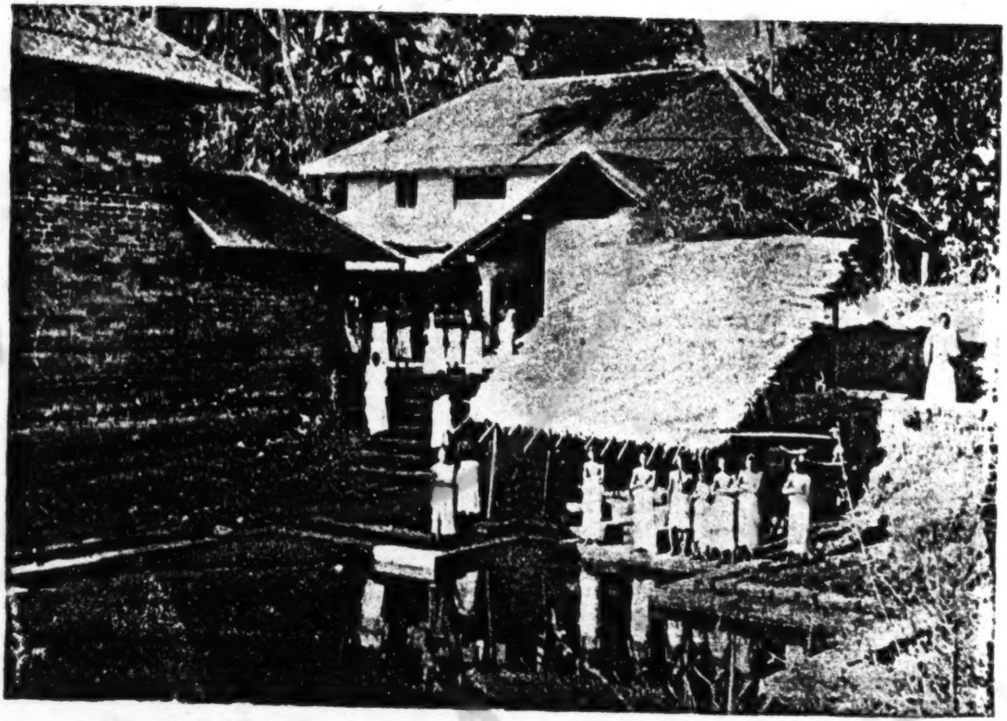
796
776 round by south to the westward, and leaving the enclosure
proceeds to a certain banyan tree under which is a high
raised platform built up with earth and stones. Preced-
796 ing the procession at a distance of 50 yards are the nine
564 men of the Tîyan caste, mentioned already, carrying
kalasams on their heads, and a crowd of women of the
same caste, each one carrying a pewter plate—*larger* than
the plates used when encircling the fire pit—on which are
rice, etc., and the burning wick as before. The plate and
its contents on this occasion as well as before is called tala-
pôli. I could not make out that anything in particular is
done at the banyan tree, and the procession soon returns to
the temple, the nine men and the Tîyan women following,
[982] carrying their kalasams and talapôli. On the way,
a number of cocks are given in sacrifice by people under
a vow. In the procession are a number of "devil
dancers" garlanded with white flowers of the pagoda tree
mixed with red, jumping, gesticulating, shouting, in an
avenue of the crowd in front of the elephant bearing the
sword. The person under a vow holds the cock towards
one of these "devil dancers" who (never ceasing his
gyrations, mad-like gestures and contortions), presently
seizes its head, wrings it off, and flings it high in the air.
[755] The vows which are fulfilled by this rude decapitation of
cocks have been made in order to bring about cure for
some ailment.

The procession passes through the temple yard, the enclosure, from west to east, and proceeds half a mile to a banyan tree under which, like the other, there is a high raised platform. When passing by the temple, the Tîyan women empty the contents of their plates in the fire pit as before, and the nine men hand over the arrack in their kalasams to the temple servants. Let us note here as we go along the curious distribution of this rice which is heaped in the fire pit. Two-thirds of it go to the four Tîyans carrying the Pû (flower) kalasams and one-third to the five who carried the Jannakalasams. Returning to the procession, we find it at the raised platform to the east of the temple. On this platform have been placed already an ordinary bamboo quart-like measure of paddy, and one of rice, each covered with a plantain leaf. The principal devil dancer takes a handful of rice and paddy and flings it all around. The procession then visits in turn the gates of the gardens of the four owners of the temple. At each is the measure of rice and the measure of paddy covered with plaintain leaves as before, beside them

6:Fawcett G-5 (ca. 1900)1915
AW11 Kerala AW11
Nayar

PL. XIV.

[Facing P. 262]



A NAYAR HOME, PANUR, N. MALABAR. THE BATHING TANK AND BATHING SHED IN THE FOREGROUND.

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796
a small lamp or burning wick, and the devil dancer throws 564
a handful towards the house. It then finds its way to the
tree to the west under which, on the platform, is now a
measure of paddy and a lamp; some Brâhmans* repeat
mantrams and the elephant, the priest on his back and
the sword in his hand, all three, are supposed to tremble
violently. Up to this time the procession has moved
leisurely, a very slow march. Now, starting suddenly, it
proceeds at a run to the temple where the priest descends
quickly from the elephant and is taken inside the temple
by the Mûssad priests. He who has been carrying the
sword all this time places it on the sill of the door of the
room in which it is kept for worship, and prostrates
before it. The sword then shakes itself for 15 minutes! [778]
until the chief priest stays its agitation by sprinkling on
it some tirtam, fluid made sacred by having been used for
anointing the image of the goddess. This done, the
chief amongst the devil dancers will with much internal
tumult as well as outward convolutions say, in the way
of oracle, whether the Dêvi has been pleased with the
festival in her honour, or not. As he pronounces this
oracular utterance he falls in a sort of swoon, and every
soul, excepting only the priests and the temple servants,
leaves the place as quickly as possible. The sheds which 796
have been erected for temporary habitation around the 782
temple will be quickly demolished, and search will be
made round about to make sure that no one remains near 564
while the mystic rite of sacrifice is about to be done.
When the whole place has been cleared, the four owners
of the temple, the senior members of the Taravâds who
stand in the position of owners and who, by the way,
have stayed, hand over each a goat with a rope tied
round its neck to the chief priest; and as soon as they
have done so they too depart. There will remain now [793]
in the temple three Mûssads, one drummer (Marayar)
and two temple servants: no others. These Mûssads are [534]
commonly called Brâhmans though the Nambûtiris do
not admit them to be such. The reason for all this
secrecy seems to lie in objection to let it be known
generally that any sacrifice is done. I was told again
and again that there was no such thing. It is a mystic
secret. The Mûssad priests repeat mantrams over the [789]
goats for an hour as a preliminary to the sacrifice. Then [793]

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* East Coast Brahmans (Pattar) I think: perhaps Mûssads.

796 564 782 793 the chief priest dons a red silk cloth and takes in his hand a chopper-like sword in shape something like a a small bill-hook—while the goats are taken to a certain room within the temple. This room is rather a passage than a room as there are to it but two walls, running north and south. The goats are made to stand in turn in the middle of this room, facing to the south; the chief priest stand to the east of a goat facing west as he cuts off its head with the chopper. He never ceases his mantrams and the goats never flinch,—the effect of the mantrams! Several cocks are then sacrified in the same place, and over the carcasses of goats and cocks there is sprinkled charcoal powder mixed in water (karutta gurusi) and saffron powder and lime water (chukanna gurusi), the flow of mantrams never ceasing the while. The three Mûssads only see the sacrifice, a part of the rite supremely secret. Equally so is that which follows. The carcass of one goat will be taken out of the temple [534] by the northern door to the north side of the temple; and from this place one of the temple servants, *who is blindfolded*, drags it three times round the temple, the Mûssads following closely repeating their mantrams, the drummer in front beating his drum softly with his fingers. The drummer dare not look behind him and does not know what is being done. After the third round the drummer and the temple servant go away and the three Mûssads cook some of the flesh of the goats and one or two of the cocks (or a part of one) with rice. This rice when cooked is taken to the kâvu (grove), to the north of the temple, and there the Mûssads again ply their mantrams. As [533] each mantram is ended a handful of saffron powder is flung on the rice, and all the time the drummer who by this time has returned, the only one present with the priests, keeps up an *obligato pianissimo* with his drum, using his fingers: he faces the north and the priests face the south. Presently, having done with the mantrams, the priests run (*not walk*) once round the temple carrying the cooked rice and scattering it wide as they go, repeating their mantrams. They enter the temple and remain within until day-break. No one can leave the temple until morning comes. Before daybreak the temple is thoroughly swept and cleaned, and then the Mûssads go out and the five Nambûtiris again enter before sunrise and perform the ordinary worship thrice in the day. For this one day only. The next morning the Mûssad priests return and resume their duties.

Men and women who have taken part in the festival 796
are considered to have undergone spiritual purification 564
each in his or her own caste, and to have marked their [554]
position in it as well as in the social scale. [083]

Beyond noting that the weirdness of the human [541]
tumult busy in its religious effusion is on the last night
enhanced by fireworks, mere description of the scene of the festival will not be attempted, and such charming adjuncts of it as the gallery of pretty Nâyar women looking on from the garden fence at the seething procession in the lane below must be left to the imagination for the present, while we must be content with such accuracy as we may attain on all points: neither fancy nor beauty shall allure us from the dull path of precision, for the mere features of the ceremonial are one real concern.

It will have been noticed that the Nambûtiris hold aloof from the festival: they purify the temple before and after, but no more.

The importance attached to the various offices of those 794
who are attached to the temple by however slender a 578
thread, was illustrated by a rather amusing squabble
between two of the Mukkuvans (fishermen), an uncle and 564
nephew, as to which of them should receive the silver umbrella from the temple and bear it to the house of the goldsmith to be repaired. How the squabble arose, how indeed there could have arisen a squabble on such a point as seniority between an uncle and a nephew amongst Mukkuvans, whose descent is reckoned from father to son, I know not, but during the festival one of them made a rapid journey to the Zamorin (about 50 miles distant), paid some fees and established himself as the senior who
had the right to carry the umbrella. There are points 796
of resemblance between this festival and the village [171]
festival of Southern India where the buffalo "devoted"
to the goddess of the village is sacrificed, where there is the slaughter of the lamb by the strong teeth of a man, the dressing up in leaves, the man naked and blindfolded going round outside the village while cooked rice and blood are scattered wide, the blindfolded man falling senseless before the goddess at the end of it.*

There are many festivals in Malabar description of 796
which would be very interesting, but information in 114
detail is wanting in my notes, so I must perforce rest content with what has been related of the festival at the

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* Described at length by me in the "Journal of the Anthropological Society of Bombay" some eight years ago.

796 114 Pishâri Kâvu which represents one of moderate importance and truly one of the people, and its narration is fairly complete. It seems to express the religion of the Nâyars as it is when not tacked on to that of the Brâhmans: as they formulate it of themselves entirely in their own way.

796 184 An important local festival is that held near Palghat, in November, in the little suburb Kalpâti inhabited entirely by Pattar Brâhmans from the east; but it is not a true Malayali festival and it suffices to mention its existence for it in no way represents the religion of the Nâyar. The dragging of cars on which are placed the images of deities, common everywhere from the temple of Jagganath, at Pûri in Orrisa, to Cape Comorin, is quite unknown in Malabar excepting only at Kalpâti which is close to the eastern frontier of Malabar. The Kalpâti 782 festival is the only "car festival" in Malabar.

[131] [346] Near Chowghât (Chavagât), about 30 miles to the southward of Calicut, on the backwater, an arm of the sea and separated from it by a thin strip of land between the rivers, at a place called Guruvayûr, is a very important temple the property of the Zamorin, yielding a very handsome revenue. I visited this festival on one occasion and saw there much which was of interest but which must find place in the account of regions of others [126] than Nâyars. Here purchase was made of a few offerings such as are made to the temple in satisfaction of [532] vows. A very rude representation of an infant in silver, a hand, a leg, an ulcer, a pair of eyes, and, most curious of all, a silver string which represents a man—the giver. Symbolization of the offering of self is made by a silver [326] string as long as the giver is tall! Goldsmiths working in silver and gold are to be seen just outside the gate of the temple ready to provide at a moment's notice the object any person intends to offer, in case he is not already in possession of his votive offering.

The subject of vows can be touched on but incidentally here.* A vow is made by one desiring offspring, to have his hand or leg cured, to have an ulcer cured, to fulfil any desire whatsoever, and he decides in solemn affirmation to himself (it is not necessary to go to a temple for the purpose of vowing) to give a silver image of a child, a silver

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[113] * The subject of vows generally, including description of a Roman Catholic shrine at Cochin somewhat akin to that at Guravayûr, was treated by me in an article which appeared in the 'Calcutta Review' for January 1899.

leg, and so on, in the event of his having fulfilment of his 782
desire. The offering is never an adjunct of the prayers;
it is always something done for benefit received. The
thing to be noted is that a vow is *always* fulfilled; fulfilled
as well as the vower can possibly fulfil it; it is never
forgotten or overlooked.

> "When the devil was sick the devil a saint would be
> "When the devil was well the devil a saint was he"

is a couplet inapplicable to the Nâyar, or, indeed, to any people in Southern India, where vows, of objects to be given or animals to be sacrified, are treated always with the utmost sacredness even by people who perhaps in no relation of life behave for an hour with common honesty.

A true Malayali festival is that held at Kottiôr, in 796
North Malabar, in the forest at the foot of the Wynâd
hills rising 3,000 to 5,000 feet from the sides of the little
glade where it is situated. It is held in July during the
height of the monsoon rain. The average rainfall at 132
Kottiôr in July is probably 60 inches at least, so the
devotees generally get a good ducking. Though it is a
festival for high and low these do not mix at Kottiôr. The 564
Nâyars go first, and after a few days, the Nâyars having
done, the Tîyans, and so on. A curious feature of it is
that people going to attend it are distinctly rowdy, feeling
they have a right to abuse in the vilest and filthiest terms
everyone they see on the way—perhaps a few days'
march; and not only do they abuse to their hearts'
content in their exhuberant excitement, but they use personal
violence to person and property all along the road.
They return like lambs.

I have not been able to ascertain with that definiteness 796
which would enable me to offer more than an opinion, the 782
connection between this violence of language and physical
force against innocent people who are met *en route*, and
the object of worship at Kottiôr, so will leave that part of
the subject alone. The other day I visited the Gangamma 778
festival at sacred Tirupati in North Arcot, and observed,
together with conduct the most truly religious vows being
carried out with the strongest disregard to personal
comfort, the use of language truly filthy and obscene
towards the goddess herself! "Gangamma! You have a——
(using a filthy word for the vagina) as big as a basket."
"She is a whore" said another; and each one in the little
crowd of votaries, evidently from the same village, as
they approached the shrine, tried to out-do the other in
insult and vituperation of the goddess to whom they had

796 come to pay their vows for some good done them by her.
782 Obscenities which need not be described were done—these
chiefly by people of very low caste let it be said—by
people who felt that neither gesture in the dance nor
word could be gross enough to express the violence of
their feelings. Yet these people, men and women, rolled,
or were rolled, for they soon become unconscious, many
times round the temple, their arms stretched towards it,
their hair, their clothes (scanty enough) and persons
generally thick with the dust. A piteous sight. And
796 there were to be seen men carrying over their heads an
782 ornamented wooden canopy, the whole (and no light
785 weight) held up, fastened to the person by the ends of the
supports of the canopy, being stuck through the skin of
the back and of the chest. Nothing resting on the
shoulders or held in the hand. I saw a man who, to fulfil
a vow to this goddess who was abused so vilely, had done
this every year for over twenty years, and this year
handed on performance of the painful vow to his son, a
growing lad. The bearers of these canopies danced
continuously as if trying to make the points in their flesh
as hurtful as possible. So that, together with vituperation
of the goddess, there was much veneration, and there is no
hesitation in expressing this through bodily discomfort
and pain.

796 Content for the present with this example from another
part of the Presidency, we will return now to Kottiôr
[346] which I visited in November 1894. One sees a temple of
Isvara, there called Perumâl (or Perumâl Iswara) by the
people; a low thatched building forming a hollow square,
in the centre of which was the shrine which, I was not
[793] permitted to see. There were some Nambûtiri priests who
came out and entered into conversation. Their life far
away in the forest must be a lonely one. The refreshment
which they offered, butter-milk and sugar, was
[574] accepted thankfully. The Nambûtiris, very unsophisticated
persons and much wrapped up in their personal
sanctity, placed the milk and sugar on the ground, and
invited us graciously to partake. A large piece of
cocoanut which they threw to my dog was, strange to say,
eaten greedily by the beast.

796 The festival is not held at the temple but in the forest
about quarter of a mile distant. This spot is deemed
778 extremely sacred and dreadful. There was, however, no
objection to myself and my companion visiting it: we
were simply begged not to go. There were with us a

Nâyar and a Kurichchan, and the faces of these men 796
when we proceeded to wade through the little river, knee-deep 778
and about 30 yards wide, in order to reach the sacred spot of the festival, expressed anxious wonder. They dared not accompany us across. No one (excepting, of course, a Muhammadan) would go near the place unless during the few days of the festival when it is safe: at all other times any man going to the place is destroyed instantly. How much this belief has to do with Îswara need not be commented on! Nothing on earth would have persuaded either the Nâyar or the Kurichchin to cross that river. Orpheus proceeding to find his Eurydice, Dante about to enter the Inferno had not embarked on so fearful a journey! About a hundred yards beyond the stream we came upon the sacred spot, a little glade in the forest. Why this uncomfortable place was chosen I know not; in the rains when the festival is held it is usually under water, and the people have to stand in water. In the centre of the glade is a circle of piled up stones, 12 feet in diameter. In the middle of the pile of stones is a rude lingam. By the same token the lingam had been broken and displaced a few days previously by some Mâppilas searching for treasure which they thought was there. *Running east from the circle of the lingam is a long shed, in the middle of which is a long raised platform of brick, used apparently as a place for cooking. Around the lingam there were also thatched sheds in which the people had lodged during the festival. Grass and weeds were growing high, and the sheds were dilapidated and looking as if they had not been used for years; but then the rain in Malabar brings about destructive effects with astonishing rapidity.

Pilgrims going to this festival carry with them offerings [782]
of some kind. Tiyans take young cocoanuts. I am not [788]

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* The circle of stones is specially interesting. Near the Angadipuram-Manjery road, between Vellila and the ferry is a monolith in the centre of a piled up platform circled with stones, the circle 30 feet in diameter. Apparently one of the many pre-Hindu remains in Malabar. Description of the ancient remains in Malabar, which are specially interesting, must be made later on. Just now let me note that stone circles are common. And I find in my notes the following: "On the hill side just about the Tirunelli temple (North Wynâd forests), where there is a clearing in the forest and the ground is somewhat flat, is a circle of stones 12 feet in diameter, and filled up with earth so as to make a raised platform nearly 2 feet in height; in the centre a small upright stone 10 inches high. To the north-east, three flat upright stones . . . . and a flat place, rudely square about 11 feet from the circle, evidently an old sacred place of some of the jungle folk."

796 778 sure what the Nâyars take; perhaps the same. Every one who returns brings with him a swish made of split young leaves of the cocoanut palm.

796 788 782 [765 [302] A shrine to which the Malayalis, Nâyars included, resort is that of Subramania in Palni, in the north-west corner of the Madura district, about a week's march from the confines of Malabar near Palghat. Not only are vows paid to this shrine, but men, letting their hair grow for a year after their father's death, proceed to have it cut there. The plate[1] shows an ordinary Palni pilgrim. The arrangement which he is carrying is called a kâvadi. There are two kinds of kâvadi: a milk kâvadi (one containing milk in a pot) and a fish kâvadi (one containing fish). The vow may be made in respect of either, each being appropriate to certain circumstances. When the time comes near for the pilgrim to start for Palni he dresses in reddish orange cloths, shoulders his kâvadi and starts out. Together with a man ringing a bell, and perhaps one with a tom-tom, with ashes on his face, he assumes the role of beggar. The well-to-do are inclined to reduce the beggar period to the minimum; but a beggar every votary must be, and as a beggar he goes to Palni in all humbleness and humiliation, and there he fulfils his vow; leaves his kâvadi and his hair and a small sum of money.

Though the individuals about to be noticed were not Nâyars, their cases illustrate very well the religious idea of the Nâyar as expressed under certain circumstances; for between the Nâyars and these there is in this respect little if any difference. It was at Guruvayûr in November 1895. On a high raised platform under a peepul tree were a number of people under vows, bound for Palni. A boy of 14 had suffered as a child from epilepsy, and seven years ago his father vowed for him (on his behalf) that if he were cured he would make the pilgrimage to Palni. He wore a string of beads round his neck and a like string on his right arm (these were in some way connected with the vow). His head was bent and he sat motionless under his kâvadi, leaning on the bar, which when he carried it rested on his shoulder. He could not go to Palni until it was revealed to him in a dream when he was to start. He had waited for this dream seven years, subsisting on roots (yams, etc.) and milk,—no rice. Now he had had the [776] long-looked-for dream, and he was about to start. As an instance of the Malayali's ignorance of the Hindu theogony, this youth said he was going to the god "Sri Krishnan" in Palni. It is well known that god there is *not* Krishna.

[1] [See Plate XI, facing p. 230, Category 116--Analyst]

Another pilgrim was a man wearing an oval band of 796
silver over the lower portion of the forehead almost covering 788
his eyes; his tongue outside his teeth, kept in position 785
by a silver skewer through it. Had been fasting two
years. Much under the influence of the god, and whacking
incessantly at a drum in delirious excitement. The
skewer was put in the day before, and was to be left in
for forty days. Several of the pilgrims wore a handkerchief [782]
tied over the mouth, they being under a vow of
silence. One poor man wore the regular instrument of
silence, the mouth-lock (a wide silver band over the
mouth, the ends reaching over the cheeks, a skewer
through both cheeks keeping the ends together * and, of
course, the mouth open); and he sat patiently in a nice
tent-like affair, about 3 feet high. People fed him with
milk, &c., but he made no effort to procure food, relying
merely on what was given him.

Pilgrims generally go in crowds under charge of a 796
priestly guide, one who, having made a certain number of 788
journeys to the shrine, wears a peculiar sash and other
gear. They call themselves pujâris, and are quite *au fait*
with all the ceremonial prior to the journey as well as
with the exigencies of the road. As I stood there, one of
these pujâris stood up amidst the recumbent crowd. He
raised his hands towards the temple a little to the west,
then spread out his hands as if invoking a blessing on the
people around him. Full of religious fervour he was
(apparently at any rate) unconscious of all but the spiritual
need of his flock.

The use of the mouth-lock is common with the Nâyars
when they assume the pilgrims' robes and set out for
Palni, and I have often seen many of them garbed and
mouth-locked going off on a pilgrimage to that place.

Brief mention must be made of the festival held at 796
Kodungallûr in the northernmost corner of the Cochin 184
State, along the coast, as it possesses some strange features 788
peculiar to Malabar and is much frequented by the
Nâyars. Kodungallûr is near Cranganore, the old Dutch
Settlement, where was, probably, the Musiris of the
Greeks. Tiruvangaikalam, close by, will probably turn
out to be the long lost site of the capital of the Chêra kingdom.
I have been disappointed in obtaining particulars

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* The mouth-lock is not peculiar to Malabar. A description of this [171]
form of vow in another part of the Presidency was made by me in the
"Journal of the Anthropological Society of Bombay," Vol. II, No. 2 (1890). [113]

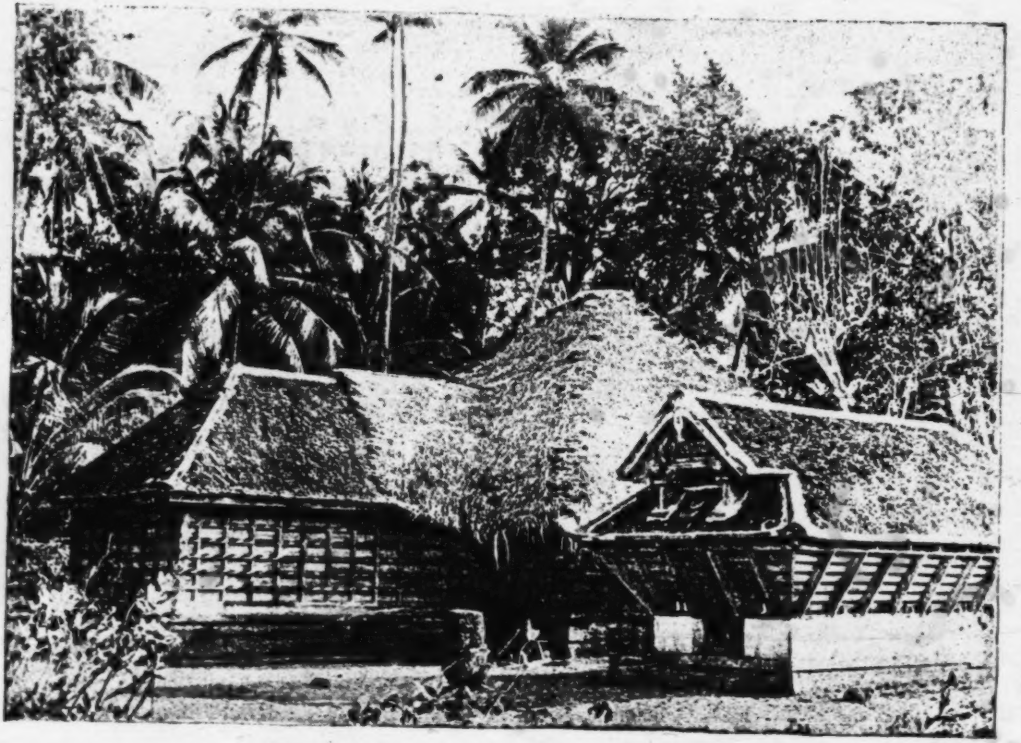
796 of the festival, so make the following excerpt from
184 Mr. Logan's well-known "Manual of Malabar." "It takes
788 the people in great crowds from their homes. The whole country near the lines of march rings with the shouts 'Nada-a Nada-a' of the pilgrims to the favourite shrines, chief of which is that at Cranganore (Kodungallûr) in the Native State of Cochin. Of what takes place when the pilgrims reach this spot perhaps the less said the better. In their passage up to the shrine the cry of 'Nada-a Nada-a' (march, march away) is varied by terms of unmeasured abuse levelled at the goddess (a Bhagavati) of the shrine. This abusive language is supposed to be acceptable to her. On arrival at the shrine they desecrate it in every conceivable way, believing that this too is acceptable; they throw stones and filth, howling volleys
[564] of opprobrium at her house. The chief of the fisherman caste, styled *Kûli Muttatta Arayan*, has the privilege of being the first to begin the work of polluting the *Bhoot*
[782] or shrine. Into other particulars it is unnecessary to enter; cocks are slaughtered and sacrificed. The worshipper gets flowers only, and no holy water after paying his vows. Instead of water he proceeds outside and drinks arrack or toddy, which an attendant Nâyar serves out. All castes are free to go, including Tîyars and low caste people. The temple was originally only a Bhoot or holy tree with a platform. The image in the temple is said to have been introduced only of recent years." It is a pity Mr. Logan is so reticent. My information is that the headman of the Mukkuvans (fisher caste) opens the festival by solemnly making a fœcal deposit on the image. Here again there is the same strange union of everything that is filthy, abusive, foul and irreverent, with every mode of expressing the deepest religious feeling.

Leaving now the religion, expression of which may be seen at temple festivals and during pilgrimages to these scenes of religious fervour, we will turn to that which we see in the house of the Nâyar at home.

791 Plate XII* shows a man standing with a sword of the shape known as Nândakam. He is an individual called a Velichchappâd, and as he stood to be photographed by me his forehead and face streamed with blood from a self-inflicted wound on the head. The Velichchappâd is a
771 familiar character in Malabar. His profession illustrates the very mixed character of the Hinduism of the Nâyar, partaking as it does of much of the lower cult,—animism,

*[see cat. 116, plate facing p. 242 -- An.]

PL. XV.



AYYAPPAN TEMPLE, NEAR CALICUT.

[Facing P. 272]

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and deification of ancestors, worship of snakes and kites, 771
ceremonies connected therewith, sacrifice, magic, witchcraft
and sorcery—together with the purest form of Vêdic
Brâhmanism known in Southern India, of which there is
the highest expression in the temples attached to the
wealthy Nambûtiri Illams, to which the Nâyar goes daily
to pray, to purify his mind after having purified his body
by bathing. There is very little to be seen of prayer in 771
Southern India outside Malabar. The great mass of the 171
people (I exclude the Brâhmans, a very minute percentage
of the whole) never dream of going to a temple daily to 782
pray; in fact prayer for its own sake scarcely exists.
People go in crowds to a temple on the occasion of a
festival to make obeisance to the god, and in a vague way
to pray, or they will go to fulfil a vow; but going merely
to pray by way of self purification of spirit is certainly
rare, for this denotes a phase of religion to which the
great mass of the people of Southern India has not
reached.

Far away in, as it may be said, rural Malabar, I witnessed 796
the ceremony in which the Velichchappâd exhibited
his quality. It was in the courtyard of a Nâyar house,
to which thronged all the neighbours (Nâyars), men and
pretty women, boys and girls. The ceremony lasts about
an hour. The Nâyar said it was the custom in his family
to have it done once a year, but could give no account of
how the custom had originated: most probably in a vow;
some ancestor having vowed that if such or such benefit
be received, he will for ever after have an annual performance
of this ceremony in his house. It involved some [465]
expenditure, as the Velichchappâd had to be paid, and
the neighbours had to be fed. Somewhere about the [357]
middle of the little courtyard, always as clean as a
dinner table, the Velichchappâd placed a lamp (of the [354]
Malabar pattern) having a lighted wick, a kalasam, which
he had prepared, some flowers, camphor, saffron and other
paraphernalia. Bhagavati was the deity invoked, and the
business involved offering flowers, and waving a lighted
wick around the kalasam. The Velichchappâd's movements 787
became quicker, and suddenly seizing the sword 796
he ran round the courtyard (*against* the sun, as the sailors
say) shouting wildly. He is under the influence of the
deity who has been induced into him, and he gives
oracular utterance to the deity's commands. What he
said I know not, and no one else seemed to know or care
in the least, much interested though they were in the

787 performance. As he ran, every now and then he cut his
796 forehead with the strange misshapen sword, pressing it
[785] against the skin and sawing (vertically) up and down.
The blood streamed all over his face. Presently he became
wilder and wilder, and whizzed round the lamp,
bending forward towards the kalasam. Evidently some
deity, some spirit, was present here, and spoke through
the mouth of the Velichchappâd, This, I think, undoubtedly
represents the belief of all who were present.
When he had done whizzing round the kalasam, he soon
became a normal being and stood before my camera.
[465] The fee for this self-inflicted laceration is one rupee and
some odds and ends of rice, etc. I saw the Velichchappâd
791 about three days afterwards going to perform
796 elsewhere. The wound on his forehead had healed! The
careful observer can always identify a Velichchappâd
by the triangular-like patch over the forehead where the
hair will not grow, and where the skin is somewhat indurated.
The Velichchappâds seem to get used to cutting
their foreheads as the eels to skinning.

We shall find the oracle again when we come to the lower races. I have seen a fine demonstration of it amongst the Paniyans of Wynâd when engaged in a regular corrobboree. An extremely interesting example of this combination of this phase of the lower Dravidian cult which is in no way Hindu, with the Brâhmanic religion, is to be seen at Mailâr in the Bellary district. There the oracle is bound up with a story about Rishis and Asuras, an incarnation of Siva and Pârvati, and many thousands assemble yearly to hear the oracle delivered by a man on the top of a huge affair representing Siva's bow, speaking the words of the god.

769 Before concluding the subject of religion, allusion
must be made to the worship of ancestors. Cremation of
782 the dead, as in the case of the Nambûtiris, is done in the
garden or compound surrounding the Taravâd house, in
the south or south-west corner of it; so the Nâyar has
the ashes and spirits of his ancestors with him always.
We have seen already how that pacification of the spirits
of those who have passed from view, and who are in the
land of the shades, pervade the lives of the living. They
are worshipped every new moon day, but especially on the
new moon of Karkitakam,* of Tulâm and of Kumbham

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[113] * The names of the Malayali months have been given already—see Nambûtiris (Bulletin, Vol. III, No. 3).

months. The last is the day following Siva râtri, the well- 769
known Hindu festival. As it was told to me "Food is 782
offered to the ghosts" on these occasions; to all ancestors,
male and female. Food of any kind except cooked rice is
offered.* It is cooked and placed in the middle room on the [532]
west side of the house, where are kept small images in gold
or silver of the senior members of the Taravâd (in poorer
houses, a stone simply is put to represent the deceased),
and the door will be shut for about ten minutes, after
which the food will be removed and eaten by the house
people. Special worship of ancestors is often made at the
temples specially sacred, on the new moons which have
been specified, especially on the last. The plate depicts
the crowd in the bed of the Ponnâni river on the day following Siva râtri. Men and women bathed and put on
clean cloths and, when they had done so put a little
burning camphor, sandalwood powder and some other
little accessories, on a leaf which was floated down the
river after a brief prayer. The scene of the picture adjoins
the temple at Tirunavâyi, supposed to be the oldest in
Malabar.

SERPENT WORSHIP.

Description, such as is here attempted, of the Nâyar's 771
religion is incomplete so far. There remains to say some- 776
thing of serpent worship and to make some allusion to
common superstitions. For description of these I would [114]
refer the interested reader to a capital little book entitled
"Malabar and its Folk" published by Messrs. Natesan
& Co., Madras, by Mr. T. K. Gopal Panniker, B.A., himself
a Nâyar as his name denotes. With this gentleman's
permission I will reproduce here chapter 12 of his book
entitled "Serpent Worship in Malabar":—

"Malabar is a country which preserves to this day primitive 776
institutions of a type peculiarly fascinating to the ethnologist.
Of the various kinds of primitive worship still practised in the
country that of the serpent occupies a prominent place. Here
the serpent is deified and offerings of pooja are often made to the
reptile. It has got a powerful hold upon the popular imagination. Each household has got its own serpent deity possessing
large powers for good as well as for evil. A separate spot is set
apart in the house-compound as the abode of these deities. This [778]
reserved spot is converted into a small jungle almost circular in

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* Bread made of rice flour may be offered.

776 shape. It is overgrown with trees of various kinds, and shrubs,
778 and sometimes medicinal plants also. In the middle of this
quasi-circular shrine images usually made of laterite after
specified shapes are arranged in certain established methods and
a passage is opened to the seat of these images from outside.
This spot is so scrupulously reserved, that not even domestic
animals are allowed to stray therein. No trees from the place
are to be felled down, nor any plant whatever for that matter
with any metal or more particularly iron weapons; for these
are unholy things, the introduction alone of which inside the
sanctified area, not to say the actual cutting down of the tree, is
regarded as exceedingly distasteful to these serpent gods. They
[564] are not to be desecrated by the touch or even by the approach of
[793] a low-caste man. Once in every year at least poojah offerings
are made to these gods through the medium of the Numbûdri
[782] priests.

796 "Periodical ceremonies called Pāmbantullel are performed to
propitiate them. These are resorted to only on special occasions
776 for the purpose of averting serious visitations from the family.
782 The ceremony is a long complicated process. Any individual
drawn from among the Nairs themselves is capable of acting the
part of priests on these occasions. A day is fixed for the opening
of the ceremony; and a particular plot of ground in the house
yard is cleansed and preserved for the performance of the poojahs
[532] incidental to the ceremony. Then on the spot certain square
figures are drawn, one inside another, and these are tastefully
diversified by the interpolation of circular figures and others
inside and about them, based on geometrical principles. A
peculiar symmetry is observed in the matter of these figures.
The figures used in the drawings are usually of various colours,
red, white, black and others. Ordinary rice-flour, then again
such flour mixed with a combination of chunnam and turmeric
powder, thereby making the flour pure red, and burnt paddy husk
are chiefly employed. Then a number of other accessories are
also required for the ceremony in the shape of lamps, cocoanuts,
eatables of various sorts prepared from paddy and rice and some
other cooked things, such as rice, bread made of rice, and others.
[533] These are properly arranged in the place and poojah is offered
by the priest with the slow recitation of *mantrams*, and some holy
songs or ballads in memory of these gods. Then a number of
Nair women, with perfect purity and cleanliness of person are
seated close to each other in a row or two. These women are to
preserve sanctity and purity of their persons by a total abstinence
from animal food, intoxicants and anything else of an exciting
nature for a prescribed period of time; and it is only after the
lapse of this period that they become worthy of being admitted to

this ceremony. Thus having purged their bodies of all worldli- 796
ness they are taken into the ceremony and are seated as described 776
before. Now by means of the *mantrams* and poojah the serpent 782
gods are propitiated and in consequence they manifest themselves [787]
in the bodies of these female representatives of theirs. The
entrance of the gods into their bodies is characterised by a fearful 796
concussion of their whole frame, gradually developing into a 776
ceaseless, shaking, particularly the upper parts. A few minutes 782
afterwards, they begin to speak one by one and their speeches are 787
regarded as expressions of the god's will. Sometimes the gods
appear in the bodies of all these females and sometimes only in
those of a select few or none at all. The refusal of the gods to
enter into such persons is symbolical of some want of cleanliness
and purity in them; which contingency is looked upon as a
source of anxiety to the individual. It may also suggest the
displeasure of these gods towards the family in respect of which
the ceremony is performed. In either case, such refusal on the
part of the gods is an index of their ill-will or dissatisfaction.
In cases where the gods refuse to appear in any one of those seated
for the purpose, the ceremony is prolonged until the gods are so
properly propitiated as to constrain them to manifest themselves.
Then after the lapse of the number of days fixed for the ceremony
and after the will of the serpent gods is duly expressed the
ceremonies close.

"One other small item of offering to these gods consists in 776
certain ballads sung by the Pulluvar females going about from 533
house to house at stated seasons of the year. They take a pretty
large pitcher, close its opening by means of a small circular piece 534
of thin leather which is fastened on to the vessel by means of 782
strings strongly tied round its neck. Another string is adjusted
to the leather cover which when played on by means of the fingers,
produces a hoarse note which is said to please the god's ears,
pacify their anger and lull them into sleep. This vessel is carried
from house to house in the day time by these Pulluvar females;
and placing the vessel in a particular position on the ground,
and sitting in a particular fashion in relation to the vessel, they
play on the string which then produces a very pleasing musical
note. Then they sing ballads to the accompaniment of these
notes. After continuing this for sometime they stop, and getting
their customary dues from the family, go their own way. It is
believed that these notes and the ballads are peculiarly pleasing to
the serpent gods, who bless those for whose sakes the music has
been rendered. In consequence of the halo of sanctity that has 766
been popularly thrown round the serpent it is considered a sin of 776
a most heinous nature to kill one of these deified reptiles. The
killing of a cobra is regarded with the utmost concern amongst 825
us. In such case the carcase is taken and duly burned with all [783]

776 the necessary solemn ceremonials. Sandalwood is the fuel used
766 sometimes. A small pit is dug which is covered with sandalwood
825 pieces and they are set fire to. When the flame burns intensely the body is quietly placed in it, and reduced to ashes together with, in some cases, incense and myrrh. This is believed to mitigate the dangers consequent on the death of the serpent.

776 "The popular conception of the family cobra is that it is a
825 tiny little thing with a full developed hood, and fangs, and possessing a golden tinge; which shine brilliantly in the rays of the sun. At the sight of human beings it gets away to its holy shrine exhibiting a reeling motion on its way thither. It never gets far away from its abode of which it is the perennial guardian.

564 "One striking phase of serpent worship in Malabar relates
to the family of Pappanmakkat Nambudris and the singular
776 and effective control they exercise over serpents in general. Their
825 powers are handed from father to son. It is said that this Nambudri household is full of cobras which find their abode in every nook and corner of it. The inmates can scarcely move about without placing their feet upon any one of these serpents. Owing to the magic influence of the family the serpents cannot and will not injure them. The serpents are said to be always at the beck and call of the members of this Nambudri family and render unquestioned obedience to their commands. They watch and protect the interests of the family in the most jealous spirit. In short, these reptiles live, move, and have their being as freely as if they were domesticated animals imbued with supernatural powers.

[755] "Cases of cobra-poison are generally taken to this Brahman family and the headman sometimes summons before him the identical animal which caused injury and it is said successfully effects a cure as if by some mystic and magic influence.

825 "The serpent also plays a conspicuous part in contracts
between citizens. The family serpent is in old deeds the
425 subject-matter of sale. The sale of a house compound extends
776 also to the family serpent. The stipulation in these documents invariably is that the family serpents are sold along with the properties; and even in cases of division of family property amongst its several branches of members, the family-serpent is included in the division. Such is the sacred prominence which has been given to the serpent amongst us. Their anger
[753] is said to manifest itself in some member of the family being
[982] struck down with leprosy or some other loathsome disease; while by their propitiation they can be converted into the guardian angels of our households, powerful enough to preserve the prosperity of the inmates as well as to vouchsafe their complete immunity from the attacks of virulent diseases and sometimes even from death,"

As the subject of serpent-worship is one of fascinating 776
interest, I will add to the preceding extract, which 778
is as interesting as it is accurate, an excerpt from the
"Report of the Census of Travancore" for 1891 (the [127]
Malayalam year 1066), a book which is perhaps not accessible to many. The shrine which is described therein is in the neighbouring Native State of Travancore, but it is equally representative of one in Malabar:—

"A serpent-kavoo in Travancore. Many places of Hindu worship exist in Travancore under groves locally known as kavoos. There are thousands of these in the country. Lieutenants Ward and Conner estimated their number at 15,000 seventy years ago. This number has, I think, increased since then. These kavoos are all dedicated to minor divinities such as Nàgathans, Nàgarajas, Yekshis, Gandharvas, and Sàstas. Some are of great age and repute and own enormous properties for their maintenance. One of these a well-known sarpa-kavoo in a village 70 miles north of Travancore will be here described. Mythological origin for these sarpa-kavoos is thus stated in the Kéralòlpatti. When Parasuràma's first colonists found Kérala uninhabitable and unimprovable, they abandoned it and returned to their old country. During the time of their absence the Nàgas (serpents) of the lower world, called in popular language Nàgalòkam or Pàtàla, took possession of the newly-reclaimed land and settled there. The colonists returning found that the serpents had usurped their lands, upon which a fight ensued, and Parasuràma arbitrated between his colonists and the Nàgas, wih the result that these latter were to be given a corner of every occupied compound. Thus arose the sarpa kavoos of Malabar which, as I have already described in a previous chapter, is generally at the south-west corner of every Tarvâd garden. And Parasuràma further ordained that the places allotted to the Nàgas were to be left untouched by the knife or the spade, thus enabling the underwood trees and creepers to grow luxuriantly therein. It is to such places that the name of kavoo (or grove) is given. In the kavoo are generally planted several idols of serpents on a stone basement called chittrakoodam, and sometimes a low wall is thrown round to prevent cattle or children
trespassing into that space. The propitiation of the [782]
serpents is deemed essential for the well-being and prosperity of the householder. Offerings of noorum palum (dough and milk) of cooked rice, lights and songs are

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778 made periodically to the serpent gods in the kavoos.
The one I am describing here is one of the most important
in Travancore. This is known as Mannārsāla.
173 Once upon a time, so says tradition, a male member of
this Illam married a girl of the Vettikkòttu Illam, where
776 the serpents were held in great veneration. The girl's
778 parents being poor could give her nothing in the way of
825 dowry. They, therefore, gave her one of the stone idols
of the serpent, of which there were many in their house.
This stone idol the girl was counselled to take care of
and regularly worship; subsequently it is said the girl
became a mother and brought forth a boy and a snake,
whereupon the snake-child was located in the underground
cellar of the house and brought up. The Illam
prospered from that day. The woman and the snake
are believed to be the cause of the affluence of the
family, and to this day to the surname of the male
members of that Illom are added, by way of distinction,
[115] the names of the serpent god and that of the female.
Thus my informant, the present head of the family, is
called Vasaki Sridévi Krishnan Nambyadi. To this
gentleman I am indebted for the following further details
on the snake-worship at Mannārsāla :—He says the name
Mannārsāla means the 'unburnt ground.' This refers to
an ancient tradition that when the great Khandavavanam
was burnt by Agni, the god of fire, this small
oasis was spared on the prayer of the serpents, who
were the progeny of the serpent offspring of the lady of
this Illam. As the Illam could not well accommodate
the large number of the serpents that had multiplied,
they were removed to a spot on the south of the house,
where a magnificent grove has since been grown. In this
spot are stone idols put up for the king and queen of snakes
known as Nágarája and Nágayekshi, and for various
members of the family which, according to my informant,
number about 3,000. There are as many stone
778 images in this grove now. In the cellar of the house, as
well as in the grove where the stone images are placed,
776 a solution of noorum palum is offered once a year, that
782 is, on the day following the Sivarátri in the month of
Mási. The same kind of offering is made to the Chittrakoodom
also. About 12½ Edangalies of dough and milk
are mixed together and kept in the cellar. Thereafter
the door of the cellar is shut for three days, and lest anybody
pry into what passes within the cellar, the women
of the household cover the crevices and holes of the door

by the big cadjan umbrellas of the female inmates of the 778
Illam. On the third day the door is opened, and whatever 776
remains in the vessel of the dough and milk placed there 782
is thrown into a tank as unfit for human use. The
mixing up of noorum palum and the performing of the
poojahs are done by the eldest female member of the
Illam. The noorum palum is made of rice-flour, saffron
powder, cow's milk, water of the tender cocoanut, fruit of
the Kadali plantain, and ghee. In the Nálukettu of the
house, offerings of noorum palum and cooked rice, as
well as kuruthi (a red liquid composed of flour, saffron
and chunam), take place every Ayilyam (star) day.
Every morning the king and queen of serpents are
washed, and an offering of fruit and milk is made to
them; in the noon offerings of Vellanivedyam (cooked
rice) and afterwards of fried grain (malar) follow. During
the month of Kartika, a special poojah called navakom
and offering of noorum palum are daily observed. On
the Sivarátri day, in the month of Mási, the customary
five poojahs and navakom are performed, and in the
evening of the same day sacrificial offerings to the serpents
and kuruti, as stated above, are made, and at the
conclusion of the day's poojahs the idols are taken in
procession round the temple. On Ayilyam (star) days, 796
in the months of Purattási and Alpasi, all the serpent
idols in the grove and the temples therein are taken in 776
procession to the Illam, and offerings of noorum palum, 776
kuruti and cooked rice are made there in propitiation of 782
the serpent gods. The person who carries the idol of the
Nágarája is the eldest female member of the Illam, and
the procession is conducted with great pomp and rejoicings.
According to my informant, the eldest female
member of the house, though married, is expected to lead
a celibate life when she becomes the oldest female in the
family. During the festive days at Mannārsāla, about
5,000 people assemble to worship and propitiate the
serpent gods, and their offerings include gold and silver
coins, and gold, silver, copper or stone effigies of snakes,
grains of all kinds, pepper, salt, saffron, tender cocoanuts,
bunches of Kadali plantain, melons, oil, ghee, sandalwood,
silk and other pilgrims. On the day previous to
the Ayilyam ceremonial, about two or three thousand
Brahmans are fed. The annual expense of this institution [435]
and worship at Mannārsāla is estimated at about
2,000 rupees. The kâvu has its own paddy fields and [423]
gardens, from the revenues of which it is maintained.

778 All the land about it, measuring a mile square, is said to
423 belong to it. This would be enormous property, as the
[635] taluk where this kavoo is situated is one of the richest in
Travancore. A trifle is given by the Sircar every year.
If more funds are required, the Nambiyadi is expected to
meet them from his own private income. The grove and
its temples cover an immense oblong space measuring
about 16 acres in extent. The inmates of the Illam are
[688] the poojaries of the gods in this grove. It is believed
that whenever the poojah is not performed with the
[825] strictest personal purity or care to small details, the
serpent gods get offended, which feeling is exhibited by
778 the largest cobras coming out of the grove. It should be
remembered that, as a rule, the serpents are not seen out
776 of their holes, though hundreds of them are known to
825 exist in these large groves. When any is seen, especially if a real cobra, the village astrologer is consulted,
who readily finds out the cause of the wrath of the
serpent gods, and steps are taken immediately to pacify
them by propitiatory ceremonies. The people believe in
these ceremonies most implicitly. That is not a mere
form with them. In a house in North Travancore, where
776 I lived some years, there used to be seen now and again
825 snakes of all kinds, and in answer to my request to the
servant of my landlord to keep the kavoo neat, he
invariably said, "Please, sir, order some lights and milk
to the kavoo," for this man most sincerely believed that
this was the only effective way of keeping out the snakes
from view. He did not seem to believe that there was
any good in keeping the premises neat and clean.
It should here be noted that a true Hindu population
never pelt at or harm the snakes when they are
seen. They are objects of worship. One of our retired
officials told me that some years ago, when he was
young and new to the place, he was puzzled by some
of the parties present at his cutcherry telling him that the
'god was coming.' The crowd made way, and on rising,
this official was horrified to see that the god referred to
was a live cobra. This village he spoke of, even now
abounds with serpents, but strange to say, these reptiles
[231] seldom harm man. They are evidently become domesticated animals, for we seldom hear of snake-bites in that
village, though the general belief is that there are more
snakes there than rats. The people also seem to be quite
at home with them, for they do not get put out when
they see these reptiles."

CUSTOMS, GAMES, FESTIVALS, ETC.

Hamilton in his "New Account of the East Indies" 635 published in 1744, writes :—

"It was an ancient custom for the Samorin (Zamorin, then the local potentate) to reign but twelve years and no longer. If he died before his term was expired it saved him a trouble- [762] some ceremony of cutting his own throat on a public scaffold erected for that purpose. [574] He first made a feast for all his nobility and gentry, who were very numerous. After the feast, he saluted his guests, went on the scaffold, and very neatly cut his [766] own throat in the view of the assembly. His body was, a little while after, burned with great pomp and ceremony, and the grandees elected a new Samorin. Whether that custom was a 635 religious or a civil ceremony I know not, but it is now laid 178 aside, and a new custom is followed by the modern Samorin, that a jubilee is proclaimed throughout his dominion, at the end 527 of twelve years, and a tent is pitched for him in a spacious plain, and a great feast is celebrated for ten or twelve days with mirth and jollity, guns firing night and day, so at the end of the feast any four of the guests that have a mind to gain a crown by a desperate action in fighting their way through 30, or 40,000 of his guards, and kill the Samorin in his tent, he that kills him succeeds to him in his empire. In Anno 1695 one of these jubilees happened and the tent pitched near Ponnany (Ponani) a seaport of his about 16 leagues to the southward of Calicut. There were but three men that would venture on that desperate action, who fell on, with sword and target, among the guards, and after they had killed and wounded many were themselves killed. One of the *Desperadoes* had a nephew of fifteen or sixteen years of age, that kept close by his uncle in the attack on the guards, and when he saw him fall, the youth got through the guards into the tent and made a stroke at his majesty's head and had certainly dispatched him, if a large brass lamp which was burning over his head, had not marred the blow; but before he could make another, he was killed by the guards; and I believe the same Samorin reigns yet. I chanced to come that time along the coast and heard the guns for two or three days and nights successively."

Here must be made an excerpt from the "Malabar [114] Manual" as its author Mr. Logan, while Collector (chief administrative officer) of Malabar, made excellent use of his opportunities to delve into the ancient archives of the district.

"The *Kêrala Mâhâtmya* so far corroborates Hamilton's 635 story, that it declares the king used to be deposed at this 527 festival, but there is no mention of self-immolation. although it is quite possible the deposed kings may have

635 527 occasionally adopted this mode of escape from the chagrin of not being re-elected by their adherents." He goes on to say what Mr. Jonathan Duncan wrote about this festival, of which his account appears in the first volume of the Transactions of the Bombay Literary Society.

635 The festival was held last in 1743.

527 175 "Those who acknowledged the Zamorin's suzerainty sent flags in token of fealty; and the places where these flags used to be hoisted at festival times are still pointed out. The Valluvanād Raja, who is still represented in the management of the Tirunāvāyi temple by one of the four Brahman *Kārālars*, instead of sending a flag used to send men called *Chāvers* (men who have elected to die) whose office it was to endeavour to cut their way through the Zamorin's guards to his throne in a manner presently to be described. If they had succeeded in killing him—as on the occasion cited by Hamilton, whose statement except as to date, is moreover corroborated by tradition—it is uncertain what would have happened; but probably if a capable Raja had been ruling in Valluvanād at such a time, popular opinion would have endowed him with suzerainty, for the Nâyar militia were very fickle, and flocked to the standard of the man who was fittest to command and who treated them the most considerately.

[127] "With the kind assistance of the present Zamorin, Maharaja Bahadur, the records of his family have been examined and a complete account obtained of the events attending the festival held in 1683 A.D., the festival next preceding that alluded to by Hamilton.

[821] "The festival used to continue for twenty-eight days every twelfth year when the planet Jupiter was in retrograde motion in the sign of *Karkadagam* or Cancer or the Crab, and at the time of the eighth lunar asterism in the month of Makaram the festival used to culminate.

"On the occasion in question the Zamorin some months beforehand sent orders for the preparation of the necessary timber and bamboos for the temporary buildings required at *Tirunāvāyi* and the materials were floated down stream from the Aliparamba Chirakkal lands.

"Then exactly two months before the opening day he sent out a circular to his followers worded as follows:—

'Royal writing to the *Akampati Janam* (body-guards).

'On the 5th Makaram 858 is *Mahāmakha Talpuyam* (time of the eighth lunar asterism in the festival season), and the *Lōkars* (chief people of each locality) are required to attend at Tirunāvāyi as in olden times.

'Mangātt Raman and Tinayancheri are sent to collect and bring you in regular order for the Mahāmakham.'

"The Zamorin timed himself to arrive at Tirunāvāyi on the day after that appointed for the arrival of his followers, and the

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lucky moment for the setting out on this particular occasion on 527
the last day's stage of the journey was at the rising of the 175
constellation of Aquarius.

"The *Tirunâvâyi* temple stands on the north bank of the [821]
Ponnāni river close to the present line of railway. Passengers by train can catch a glimpse of it by looking across the level expanse of paddy-fields which lie south of the sixth telegraph post on the three hundred and eighty-second mile of the railway. There is a modest clump of trees on the river bank hiding the temple, the western gateway of which faces a perfectly straight piece of road a little over half a mile in length stretching from the temple gateway westwards to the elevated ridge [491]
hemming in the paddy-fields on the west. This road is but little raised above the level of the paddy flat. Directly facing this straight piece of road as the elevated ridge is reached there are three or perhaps four terraces, the outlines of which may still be traced in the face of the precipitous bank.

"A little to one side of the upper terrace are the ruins of a strongly built powder magazine, and on the flat ground above and on both sides of the fine avenue shading the public road at this place is ample space for the erection of temporary houses.

"In a neighbouring enclosure under cultivation is a disused [312]
well of fine proportions and of most solid construction.

"From the upper terrace alluded to a commanding view [138]
is obtained facing eastwards of the level rice-plain at foot, of the broad placid river on the right backed by low hills, of higher flat-topped laterite plateaus on the left, their lower slopes bosomed in trees, and, in the far distance, of the great chain of Western Ghâts with the Nilgiris in the extreme left front hardly distinguishable in their proverbial colour from the sky above them. It was on this spot, on a smooth plateau of hard laterite rock, raised some 30 to 40 feet above the plain, that the Zamorin used several times in the course of the festival to take his stand with the sword of Chēramān Perumāl, the last emperor, in his hand.

"The sword is and has been for centuries, slowly rusting [701]
away in its scabbard, but it is not alone on it that the Zamorin depends for his safety, for the plain below him is covered with the 30,000 Nâyars of Ernâd, the 10,000 of Polanâd and numberless petty dependent chieftains, each counting his fighting men by the hundred or the thousand or by thousands. Away on the right across the river are the camps of the second prince of the Zamorin's family and of the dependent Punnattūr Raja; the third, fourth, fifth, and sixth princes' camps too are close at hand in the left front behind the temple, and behind the terrace itself is the Zamorin's camp.

"The whole scene is being made gay with flags as an elephant is being formally caparisoned with a chain of solid gold

175 with 'one hundred and fourteen small links and one clasp, 635 making in all one hundred and fifteen'—as the record specifi- 527 cally testifies—and with golden bosses and other ornaments too numerous to be detailed. But this part of the ceremonies is not to be permitted to pass unchallenged, for it signifies in a formal manner the Zamorin's intention to assume the *rôle* of *Raksha-purashan* or protector of the festivities and of the people there assembled. On the instant, therefore, there is a stir among the crowd assembled near the western gate of the temple directly facing at half a mile distance the Zamorin's standing-place on the upper terrace.

"From this post, running due east in a perfectly straight line to the western gate of the temple, is the straight piece of road already described, but the road itself is clear and the armed crowd on the plain, it is seen, are hemmed in by barrel palisadings running the full length of the road on both sides. Two spears' length apart the palisades are placed, and the armed crowd on either hand, consisting on this occasion of the thirty thousand Ērnād Nāyars, it is seen, are all carrying spears. The spearmen may not enter that narrow lane, and by the mere weight of their bodies present an impossible obstacle to the free passage of the foemen now bent on cutting down the Zamorin in his pride of place.

"Amid much din and firing of guns the *morituri*, the *Chaver* Nāyars, the elect of four Nāyar houses in Valluvanād, step forth from the crowd and receive the last blessings and farewells of their friends and relatives. They have just taken of the last meal they are to eat on earth at the house of the temple representative of their chieftain; they are decked with garlands and smeared with ashes. On this particular occasion it is one of the houses of Putumanna Panikkar who heads the fray. He is joined by seventeen of his friends—Nāyar or Māppilla or other arms-bearing caste men—for all who so wish may fall in with sword and target in support of the men who have elected to die.

"Armed with swords and targets alone they rush at the spearmen thronging the palisades; they 'winde and turn their Bodies, as if they had no Bones, casting them forward and backward, high and low, even to the Astonishment of the Beholders,' as worthy Master Johnson describes them in a passage already quoted (page 137). But notwithstanding the suppleness of their limbs, notwithstanding their delight and skill and dexterity in their weapons, the result is inevitable and is prosaically recorded in the chronicle thus: 'The number of *Chavers* who came and died early morning the next day after the elephant began to be adorned with gold trappings—being *Putumanna Kantur Menon* and followers—were 18.

"At various times during the ten last days of the festival the same thing is repeated. Whenever the Zamorin takes his

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[701]

stand on the terrace, assumes the sword and shakes it, men rush forth from the crowd at the west temple gate only to be impaled on the spears of the guardsmen who relieve each other from day to day. The turns for this duty are specifically mentioned in the chronicle thus: 'on the day the golden ornaments are begun to be used the body-guard consists of the thirty thousand; of Ellaya Vakkayil Vellōdi (and his men) the second day, of Netiyiruppu,* Mūttarāti Tirumulpād (and his men) the third day of Ittatūrnād,† Nambiyātiri Tirumulpād (and his men) the fourth day, of Ērnād Mūnāmkūr,‡ Nambiyātiri Tirumulpād (and his men) the fifth day, of Ērnād,§ Elankur Nambiyāttiri Tirumalpād (and his men) the sixth day, and of the ten thousand,‖ the Calicut Talachanna Nāyar and Ērnād Mēnon the seventh day.'

"The chronicle is silent as to the turns for this duty on the eighth, ninth and tenth days. On the eleventh day, before the assembly broke up and after the final assault of the *Chāvers* had been delivered, the *Ernad Elankur Nambiyātiri Tirumalpad* (the Zamorin next in succession) and the *Tirumanisseri Nambūtiri* were conveyed in palanquins to the eastern end of the narrow palisaded lane, and thence they advanced on foot, prostrating themselves four times towards the Zamorin, once at the eastern end of the lane, twice in the middle, and once at the foot of the terraces. And after due permission was obtained they took their places on the Zamorin's right hand.

"After this, so the chronicle runs, it was the duty of the men who have formed the body guard to march up with music and pomp to make obeisance. On this occasion, however, a large portion of the body-guard seems to have been displeased, for they left without fulfilling this duty, and this story corroborates in a marked way the facts already set forth (page 132) regarding the independence and important political influence possessed by the Nāyars as a body.

"The *Ernād Menon* and the *Calicut Talachanna Nāyar* with their followers were the only chiefs who made obeisance in due form to the Zamorin on this occasion, and possibly by the time of the next festival (1695 A.D.), of which Hamilton wrote, the dissatisfaction might have increased among his followers and the Zamorin's life even may have been endangered

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* The fifth Prince of the Zamorin's family.

† The fourth Prince of the Zamorin's family.

‡ The third Prince of the Zamorin's family.

§ The second Prince and heir apparent of the Zamorin's family.

‖ The ten thousand of Pōlanād, the district round about Calicut, formed the Zamorin's own immediate body-guard—Conf. the account contained in the *Kēralolpatti* of how these men were originally selected—Chapter III, section (*a*).

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635 527 as Hamilton alleges, probably through lack of men to guard him. Tradition asserts that the *Chāver* who managed on one occasion to get through the guards and up to the Zamorin's seat belonged to the family of the Chāndrattil Panikkar.

" The chronicle winds up with a list of the *Chāvers* slain on this occasion, viz. :—

When the Zamorin was taking his stand on the terrace apparently at the commencement of festivities	5
On the day the elephant was adorned as already stated	18
" The next day of *Chandrattil Panikkar* and followers, the number who came and died	11
' Of *Verkōt Panikkar* and followers the number that came and died the third day.	12
' The number who came to Vakkayūr and died in the four days	4
' The number of *Chāvers* who were arrested at the place where Kalattal Itti Karunākara Menon was, and brought tied to Vakkayūr and put to death	1
' The number of *Chāvers* arrested on the day of the sacrifice, when all the men together made the obeisance below Vakkayūr at the time when the Zamorin was taking his stand, and left tied to the bars, and who were afterwards brought to Vakkayūr and after the ceremony was over and the Zamorin had returned to the palace were put to the sword	4
Total ...	55

" The chronicle does not mention the fact, but a current tradition states that the corpses of the slain were customarily kicked by elephants as far as the brink of the fine well, of which mention has been made, and into which they were tumbled promiscuously. The well itself is nearly filled up with dêbris of sorts, and a search made at the spot would probably elicit conclusive evidence of the truth of this tradition.

627 " The martial spirit of the Nāyars was in former days kept alive by such desperate enterprises as the above, but in every-day-life the Nāyar used to be prepared and ready to take vengeance on any who affronted him, for he invariably carried weapons, and when a man was slain it was incumbent on his

family to compass the death of a member of the slayer's family. 627
This custom was called *kudippaka* (literally, *house feud*), or in an
abbreviated form, *kuduppu*. One curious fact connected with 627
this custom was that the chieftain of the district intervened 634
when a man was slain, and the body of the deceased was by him taken to his enemy's house, and the corpse and the house were burnt together. It is understood that an out-house was usually selected for this purpose, but it was a common phrase to say—

'the slain rests in the yard of the slayer.'

"Again when mortal offence was given by one man to 627
another, a solemn contract used to be entered into before the 634
chieftain of the locality to fight a *duel*, the chieftain himself 578
being the umpire. Large sums (up to a thousand fanams or [525]
two hundred and fifty rupees) used to be deposited as the battle-
wager, and these sums formed one source (*ankâm*) of the chieftain's [652]
revenue, and the right to levy them was sometimes transferred along with other privileges appertaining to the tenure of the soil. A preparation and training (it is said) for twelve years preceded the battle in order to qualify the combatants in the use of their weapons. The men who fought were not necessarily the principals in the quarrel—they were generally their champions. It was essential that one should fall, and so both men settled all their worldly affair before the day of combat."

The origin of the duo-decimal period is obscure, but 423
to this day it obtains in Malabar (and in Malabar only)
in relation to all agricultural affairs. The land, in 427
contradistinction to the rest of the Presidency (as a rule), is the absolute property of the landholders—the whole of Malabar is; the landholders let out their land under
certain conditions for periods of twelve years. This is [178]
the ordinary period of tenure; now a days, much of the
land is leased informally on a yearly tenure. Tenants must renew their right to possession of their land every
twelve years. The subject of land tenure in Malabar is [821]
a very extensive one, and we will not discuss it, resting satisfied with having noted the observance of the twelve yearly cycle in connection with it. It is supposed to be governed by the cycle of Jupiter.*

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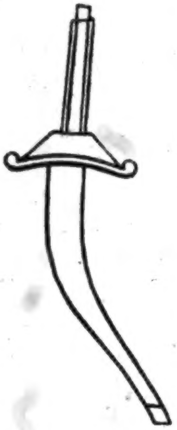
* Friar Jordanus, Bishop of Quilon in the 14th century, said that [782]
people make a vow, and to fulfil it cut off their own head before an idol.
"Barbosa says that the king of Quilaene or Coliacaud (Calicut). . . . [762]
after reigning 12 years, always sacrificed himself to an idol in this way."—
"Madras Manual of Administration," vol. iii, page 643.

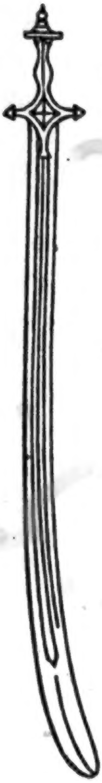
875
The month Karkkatakam, when the Malayalis say
526 "the body is cool," is the time when, according to
[827] custom, the Nâyar youths practise physical exercises.
[564] At Payôli in North Malabar, when I was there in August
1895, the local instructor of athletics was a Paravan, a
[553] mason by caste. As he had the adjunct 'Kurup' to his
name it took some time to discover the fact. Teachers
875 of his ilk are invariably of the Paravan caste, and when
526 they are believed to be properly accomplished they are
564 given the honorific 'Kurup.' So carefully are things
regulated that no other person was permitted to teach
athletics within the amshom (a local area, a small
[844] county): and his women folk had privileges, they only
being the midwives who could attend on the Nâyar
women of the amshom. His fee for a course of exercises
for the month was ten rupees. He and some of his
pupils gave an exhibition of their quality.



526 Besides bodily contortions and somersaults (practised in a long low-roofed shed having a sandy floor) there is play with the following instruments:—"Waṭṭa" (as in the illustration) "cheruvadi," a short stick, and a stick like a quarter staff called a sarîravadi—"stick the length of one's body." The waṭṭa is held in the right hand as a dagger; it is used to stab or strike and, in some ingenious way turn over an opponent. The total length of the waṭṭa is two feet, and of the cheruvadi about three feet. The latter is squared at the ends and is but a short staff.

It is held in the right hand a few inches from the end, and is used for striking and guarding only. The sarîravadi is held at or near one end by one or by both hands; the distance between the hands is altered constantly, and so is the end of the stick, which is grasped now by one now by another end by either hand as occasion may require; sometimes it is grasped in the middle. The performance with these simple things was astonishing. I should say the waṭṭa and the cheruvadi represented swords, or rather that they were used for initiation or practice in swordmanship when the Nâyars were the

military element in Malabar. The opponents who 526
faced each other with the sarîravadi or quarter staff, stood 30 feet apart, and, as if under the same stimulus, each kicked one leg high in the air, a la cancan, gave several lively bounds in the air, held their staff horizontally in front with outstretched arms, came down *slowly* on the haunches, placed the staff on the ground, bent over and touched it with the forehead. With a sudden bound they were again on their feet, and after some preliminary pirouetting went for each other tooth and nail.



The sword play which one sees during festive ceremonies, a marriage or the like, done by the hereditary retainers who fight imaginary foes and destroy and vanquish opponents with much contortion of body, always indulge in much of this preliminary overture to their performance. There is always, by way of preliminary, a high kick in the air, followed by squatting on the haunches, bounding high, turning, twisting, pirouetting, and all the time swinging the sword unceasingly. above, below, behind the back, under the arm or legs—in ever so many impossible ways.

Nâyar swords and shields are 714
figured in the illustration. The shields 411
are made of wood covered with leather, usually coloured bright red. Within the boss are some hard seeds, or metal balls loose in a small space, so that there is a jingling sound like that of the small bells on the ankles of the dancer, when the shield is oscillated or shaken in the hand. The swords are those which were used ordinarily for fighting. There are also [531]
swords of many patterns for processional and other purposes, more or less ornamented about the handle and half way up the blade ; but the one which is figured will suffice to show what the Nâyar fighting sword was like. The smaller shields are now used in play.

THE ÔNAM FESTIVAL.

796 [431] The popular festival of Malabar is the Ônam, occurring in the last days of August or early in September. It is the great occasion for general rejoicing, when every one gives and receives presents, when the children are to be seen roaming everywhere gathering flowers, to make the flower carpets which are a distinctive feature of this happy season. For the Ônam is not merely a one-day festival. It lasts three days at least, and the ten days preceding it are occupied in preparations and in games—Ônam games. A writer (a Malayali evidently), in the "Calcutta Review" for January 1899, thus describes the Ônam season:—

796 539 "There are a great many of these Ônam ballads; but most of them are of a piece with the specimen given. It is a delight to hear them chanted in the early morning hours by bands of light-hearted children with clear bell-like voices;—

Chembil house maiden, little maiden,
What did he give you who yesterday came?
A new dress he gave me, a small dress he gave me,
A lounge likewise on which to recline,
A tank to disport in, a well to draw water from, a compound
To gambol in, a big field to sing in.
Freshen up flowers, oh freshen for me.
On the south and the north shore, in the compound of Kannan, there grew up and flourished a thumba flower plant.
Out of this plant were fifty boats gotten; at the head of each boat a banyan tree grew.
From the banyan there grew a tiny little babe, and a drum and a stick for the baby to play with.
The drum and the drum-stick, the household domestic, all together they flew away and they vanished.
Freshen up, flowers, oh freshen for me.
A measure and a half measure, and elephant's chains and earrings, who goes under the flower tree beneath which the elephant passes?
It is no one at all, it is no one at all; it is the Kuttikat baby god; when we went forth to pluck of ripe fruit, a mischievous urchin sprang up and bit us.
With bitten foot when we went to the Brahmin's, the Brahmin lady, we found, had been injured.
With bitten foot then we went to the house of Edathil, whose lady with fever lay stricken.
Freshen up, flowers, oh freshen for me.

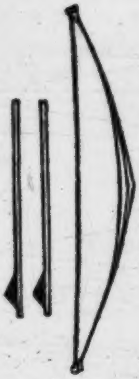
At noon of Attam day a bamboo fresh sprouted, and therewith we made us a good fish trap. 796 539
And when to the tank a fishing we went, we baited a minnow.
By its tail did we hold it, on the *bund* did we dash it, and of cocoanuts, with milk full, eighteen we ground.
With elephant pepper we dressed it; with asafœtida we filled it, right up to the elephant's head.
Freshen up, flowers, oh freshen for me.

Having set out at dawn to gather blossoms, the little children 796 824 return with their beautiful spoils by 9 or 10 A.M.; and then the daily decorations begin. The chief decoration consists of a carpet made out of the gathered blossoms, the smaller ones being used in their entirety, while the large flowers and one or two varieties of foliage of differing tints are pinched up into little pieces to serve the decorator's purpose. This flower carpet is invariably made in the centre of the clean strip of yard in front of the neat house. Often it is a beautiful work of art accomplished with a delicate touch and a highly artistic sense of tone and blending. Among the flowers that contribute to the exquisite design may be named the common red, as well as the rarer variegated, lantana, the large red shoe flower *(Hibiscus rosa sinensis)* an indispensable feature of the cultivated vegetation in a Malayali's homestead, the yellow marigold, the yellow aster, the scarlet button flower, the sacred *tulsi (Ocimum sanctum)*, the wee, modest *thumber* (a vermifugal member of the Nepetæ tribe), the common *tagara* (yellow wild Cassia), the beautiful bluebell, and another common species of Cassia which the natives call the "Ônam flower." In addition, various little violet and purple wildlings that adorn the margins of rice fields, and beautiful specimens of the lily and allied orders of tropical plants are requisitioned by the weavers of these remarkably handsome, but, alas, quickly perishable, carpets. The carpet completed, a miniature pandal, hung with little festoons, is erected over it, and at all hours of the day neighbours look in, to admire and criticise the beautiful handiwork. This object is peculiar to the naturally well favoured province of Kéralam; and it serves to remind us that the people who possess the refined taste to produce such a pretty work of art must have long enjoyed a very high order of civilisation."

It has been noticed already under description of 796 Nambûtiri Brahmans (Bulletin, Vol. III, No. 1), that the 431 cloths given as "Ônam presents" are yellow, or some part of them is yellow. There must be at least a yellow stripe or a small patch of yellow in a corner, which suggests a relic of sunworship in a form more pronounced than that which obtains at present. It is a harvest 796

796 festival, about the time when the first crop of paddy is
[132] harvested. As a rule the Ônam season is one of
bright sunshine following the almost continuous rain of
June, July and August.

526 I once witnessed a very interesting game called êitû
(êiththu), played by the Nâyars in the Southern portion
796 of Kurumbranâd during the ten days preceding Ônam.
[184] Curiously, the locality and the period are, so to speak,
fixed. There is a semi-circular stop-butt, about two feet in the highest part, the centre, and sloping to the ground at each side. The players stand 25 to 30 yards before the concave side of it, one side of the players to the right, the other to the left. There is no restriction of numbers as to "sides." Each player is armed with a little bow made of bamboo about 18 inches in length, and arrows or what answer for arrows, these being no more than pieces of the midrib of the cocoanut palm leaf, roughly broken off, leaving a little bit of the leaf at one end to take the place of the feather. In the centre of the stop-butt, on the ground, is placed the target, a piece of the heart of the plantain tree, about 3 inches in diameter, pointed at the top, in which is stuck a small stick convenient for lifting the "cheppu" as the mark which is the immediate objective of the players is called. They shoot indiscriminately at the mark, and he who hits it (the little arrows shoot straight and stick in readily) carries of all the arrows lying on the ground. Each "side" strives to secure all the arrows and to deprive the other side of theirs. A sort of "beggar my neighbour." He who hits the mark *last* takes all the arrows; that is, he who hits it, and runs and touches the mark before any one else hits it. As I stood watching, it happened several times that as many as four arrows hit the mark, while the youth who had hit it first was running the 25 yards to touch the "cheppu." Before he could touch it, as many as four other arrows had struck it; and, of course, he who hit it last and touched the mark secured all the arrows for his side. The game is accompanied by much shouting, gesticulation, and laughter. Those returning after securing a large number of arrows turned somersaults, and in saltatory motions expressed their joy.



In the south-east of Malabar, in the neighbourhood of 796 Palghat, the Ônam games are of a rougher character, the 526 tenants of certain jenmis (landlords) turning out each 184 under their own leader, and engaging in sham fights in which there is much rough play. Here, too, is to be seen a kind of boxing which would seem to be a relic of the days of the Roman pugiles using the cestus in combat. The position taken up by the combatants is much the same as that of the pugiles. The Romans were familiar [175] with Malabar from about 30 B.C. to the decline of their power. We may safely assume that the "3,000 lbs. of [263] pepper" which Alarie demanded as part of the ransom [648] of Rome when he besieged the city in the fifth century, came from Malabar.*

Before ending this very incomplete account of customs 173 of the Nâyars, mention must be made of two more of 635 these, both odd. Ever since Châraman Perumal departed from the west coast of India in A.D. 825, setting sail for Arabia and Mecca, having divided up his kingdom, His Highness the Maharajah of Travancore when ascending [788] his throne says: "I ascend the musnud, and will rule until my uncle returns." The "uncle" is Châraman Perumal, the last sovereign of the west coast, who, having embraced the Muhammadan religion which was brought to his shores by Arab traders, proceeded to carry out a wild idea—so goes the legend—of receiving instruction from the Prophet himself! He never returned. To one princeling was given the territory now known as Travancore, and his surviving successor (through the female line of course) is the present Maharajah of Travancore. To another he gave Cochin, [611] the ruler of which State also inherits through the female line. To the ancestor of the Zamorin of Calicut the Perumal gave no territory, as to the others, but he gave him his sword (it is still in existence) with the advice "to die and kill and annex." That he annexed 635 is quite clear, as he was the sovereign not only of Calicut but of the country round about when modern Europeans first visited the west coast of India. Like the [788] Maharajah of Travancore, the Zamorin repeats the formula that he rules until his uncle returns, but in his case it forms part of an elaborate and costly ceremony. The fort, which was the official residence of the Zamorin,

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* See Madras Government Museum Catalogue No. 2, Roman Coins, by Mr. Edgar Thurston, Superintendent of the Museum.

635 was in Calicut,* and it has always been necessary for
the new Zamorin to come to this fort in Calicut in a very
formal manner. The residences, the kôvilagams of the
various branches of the family, lie far to the eastward.
The heir to the Zamorinship must make his formal entry
into Calicut, for until he does so he is not, strictly
speaking, the Zamorin. There is much obscurity as to
details of the ceremonial, and I have not been able to
note these satisfactorily, so will state merely so much as
is undoubtedly correct. The new Zamorin comes to the
bank of the Kallai river adjoining Calicut. There he is
asked some questions, and he crosses this river in a
boat—not over the bridge. Arrived on the Calicut side
he must partake of some betel-leaf from a Mâppila man
dressed as a (Mâppila) woman, or, as some say, from a
Mâppila woman† and he says that he assumes the title of
Zamorin and rules until his uncle returns. The betel-
leaf, received from a (Muhammadan) Mâppila, which he
[783] chews, defiles him. He has lost his status in the caste,
and he is supposed to be henceforth celibate. It would
seem that this old world ceremony is likely to follow the
track along which so much of what is interesting in
India is disappearing. The late Zamorin never went
through it, and he was therefore never, properly speaking,
[613] the Zamorin. He held the title perfunctorily, and he
was the kârnavan of the immense property of the family;
but he could not go "in procession" as Zamorin.‡
There are three unpleasant concomitants to the ceremony.
[834] It costs much money. It involves degradation in caste.
It compels chastity.

182 The other odd custom is not one affecting merely an
562 individual and a few with him, but it is a sexual one, and

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611 * There is now no sign of it, though the site is known.

† Those who say that a woman gives the betel-leaf say, very reasonably, that a Mâppila man would never for any consideration or purpose wear a woman's garb. But, on the other hand, it is said the person *is* and must be a man, and that he dresses for this occasion only, as a woman.

‡ The Zamorin was in Calicut but once since he became Zamorin on the occasion of his visit to His Excellency the Governor of Madras in 1896, and then infringed custom by coming to Calicut without previously undergoing the ceremony. Owing to a death in the family he was under pollution and therefore unable to undertake the ceremony at that time, so he came by train. These old-fashioned customs, written or unwritten, take no count of trains. For example, the modern pilgrims from Northern India find the train very convenient when they wish to visit Rameshvaram. The penance of a life is reduced to a few days in a train. What would the old sages say! So the Zamorin came by train. But he could not go "in procession" along the road *as Zamorin*, and was obliged to make his visit as an ordinary grandee.

therefore one belonging to the community at large—in 611 562
South Malabar, at any rate. The system of inheritance 182
through females as it obtains amongst the Nâyars, relieves the woman from that undignified position which she occupies throughout the civilized world as the personal chattel of her husband. It gives her a relative superiority, and she carries this elsewhere. Coitus haud ita fit ut supina mulier viro morem gerat, immo etiam supino viro insidens illa, facie in eum conversâ genibusgue hic atqus illic dispositis negotium illud perficere solet. Hanc veneris figuram feminis ineundiorem, atque idcirco ab iis vindicatam esse perhibent periti. The well-known *jape* by which Iago hoped to arouse Brabantio into activity would be altogether inapplicable here.

Two more excerpts from Mr. Gopal Panniker's little 127
book will be made, with his permission, descriptive of 796
the other two most important national or popular festivals of Malabar.

"THE VISHU FESTIVAL.

"Vishu, like the Onam and the Thiruvathira Festivals, is a 796
remarkable event amongst us. Its duration is limited to one day. The 1st of Mêtam (some day in April) is the unchangeable day on which it falls. It is practically the Astronomical
New Year's Day.* This was one of the periods when in olden [651]
days the subjects of ruling princes or authorities in Malabar under whom their lots were cast, were expected to bring their New Year's offerings to such princes. Failure to comply with the said customary and time-conscerated demands was visited with royal displeasure resulting in manifold varieties of
oppression. The British Government finding this was a great [648]
burden pressing rather heavily upon the people, obtained as far back as 1790, a binding promise from those Native Princes that such exactions of presents from the people should be discontinued thereafter. Consequently it is now shorn of much
of its ancient sanctity and splendour. But suggestive survivals [182]
of the same are still to be found in the presents (explained [431]
further on) which tenants and dependants bring to leading families on the day previous to the Vishu.

"Being thus the commencement of a New Year, native
superstition surrounds it with a peculiar solemn importance. It [777]
is believed that a man's whole prosperity in life depends upon

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* See Madras Museum Bulletin, Vol. III, No. 1, pp. 57 and 58. [118]

796 777 the nature, auspicious or otherwise, of the first things that he happens to fix his eyes upon on this particular morning. According to Nair and even general Hindu Mythology there are certain objects which possess an inherent inauspicious character. For instance ashes, firewood, oil and a lot of similar objects are inauspicious ones which will render him who chances to notice them first fare badly in life for the whole year, and their obnoxious effects will be removed only on his seeing holy things, such as, reigning princes, oxen, cows, gold and such like ones on the morning of the next New Year. Whereas wholesome and favourable consequences can be produced by the sight of auspicious objects like those just enumerated. The effects of the sight of these various materials are said to apply even to the attainment of objects by a man starting on a special errand who happens for the first time to look at them after starting. However, with this view, almost every family religiously takes care to prepare the most sight-worthy objects on the New Year morning. Therefore, on the previous night they prepare what is known, in native phraseology, as a *kani*. A small circular bell-metal vessel is taken and some holy objects are systematically arranged inside it. A Grandha or old book made of palmyra leaves, a gold ornament, a new-washed clothe, some "unprofitably gay" flowers of the *Konna* tree, a measure of rice, a so-called looking-glass made of bell-metal, and a few other things, are all tastefully arranged in the vessel and placed in a prominent room inside the house. On either side of this vessel two brass or bell-metal lamps filled with cocoanut oil "clear as diamond sparks" are kept intensely burning and a small plank of wood or some other seat is placed in front of it. At about 5 o'clock in the morning of the day some one who has got up first wakes up the inmates, both male and female, of the house and takes them blindfolded so that they may not gaze at anything else, to the seat near the Kani. The members are seated one after another in the seat and are then and not till then asked to open their eyes and carefully look at this Kani. Then each is made to look at some venerable member of the house or sometimes a stranger even. This over, the little playful urchins of the house begin to fire small crackers which they have bought
[735] and stored for the occasion. The Kani is then taken round the place from house to house for the benefit of the poor families, which cannot afford to prepare such a costly adornment. With the close of the carelessly confused noise of the crackers the morning breaks and preparations are begun for the morning
[264] meal. This meal is in some parts confined to rice-kanji with a
[262] grand appendage of other eatable substances and in others to ordinary rice and its accompaniments, but in either case on grand scales.

796
"Immediately the day dawns the heads of the families give 431 to almost all the junior members and servants of the household and to wives and children, money-presents varying from 4 as. to a rupee or two. Children preserve these presents to serve as their pocket money. In the more numerically large families similar presents are also made by the heads of particular branches of the same family to their juniors, children, wives and servants. These presents are intended to be the forerunners of incomes to them more splendid all the year round.

"But one other item connected with the festival deserves 556
mention. On the evening of the previous day, about four or 466
five o'clock most well-to-do families distribute paddy or rice, 431
as the case may be, in varying quantities with some other
accessories to the family-workmen, whether they live on the 796
family-estates or not. In return for this, these labourers bring with them for presentation the fruits of their own labours such as vegetables of divers sorts, cocoanut oil, jaggery, plantains, pumpkins, cucumbers, brinjals, &c., in ways such as their respective circumstances might permit.

"With the close of the noon-meal the festival practically 796
concludes, and nothing remains of it for the next day or for the
same evening, for that matter. In some families after the [535]
noon-meals are over, dancing and games of various kinds are
carried on, which contribute to the enhancement of the pleasan- [526]
tries incidental to the festival. As on other prominent [524]
occasions, card-playing and other games are also resorted to."

"THE THIRUVATHÎRA FESTIVAL.

"Thiruvathira is one of the three great national occasions of Malabar. It generally comes off in the Malayalam month of Dhanu (December or January) on the day called the Thiruvathira day. It is essentially a festival in which females are almost exclusively concerned and lasts for but a single day. The popular conception of it is that it is in commemoration of the
death of Kamadevan, the Cupid of our national mythology. As [776]
recorded in the old Puranas, Kamadevan was destroyed in the
burning fire of the third eye of Siva, one of the chief members of [773]
our Divine Trinity. Hence he is now supposed as having only an ideal or rather spiritual existence, and thus he exerts a powerful influence upon the lower passions of human nature. The memory of this unhappy tragedy is still kept alive amongst us, particularly the female section, by means of the annual celebration of this important festival. About a week before the day,
the festival practically opens. At about 4 in the morning every [515]
young female member of Nair families with pretensions to decen- [533]
cy, gets out of her bed and takes her bath in a tank. Usually, a fairly large number of these young ladies collect themselves in

796 the tank for the purpose. Then all or almost all of these plunge
533 in the water and begin to take part in the singing that is pre-
[515] sently to follow. One of these then leads off by means of a peculiar rhythmic song chiefly pertaining to Cupid. This singing is simultaneously accompanied by a curious sound produced with her hand on the water. The palm of the left hand is closed and kept immediately underneath the surface of the water. Then the palm of the other is forcibly brought down in a slanting direction and struck against its surface. So that the water is completely ruffled and is splashed in all directions producing a loud deep noise. This process is continuously prolonged together with the singing. One stanza is now over along with the sound and then the leader stops a while for the others to follow her in her wake. This being likewise over, she caps her first stanza, with another at the same time beating on the water and so on until the conclusion of the song. Then all of them make a long pause and then begin another. The process goes on until the peep of dawn when they rub themselves dry and come home to dress themselves in the neatest and grandest possible attire. They also darken the fringes of their eyelids with a sticky preparation of soot mixed up with a little oil or ghee; and sometimes with a superficial coating of antimony powder. They also wear white, black, or red marks lower down the middle of their foreheads close to the part where the two eyebrows near one another. They also chew betel and thus redden their mouths
[526] and lips. Then they proceed to the enjoyment of another prominent item of pleasure, viz., swinging to and fro, on what is usually known as an Uzhinjal.*

796 "On the festival day after the morning bath is over, they
796 take a light meal and in the noon the family-dinner is voraciously
264 attacked; the essential and almost universal ingredients of which
262 being ordinary ripe plantain fruits and a delicious preparation
[535] of arrow-root powder purified and mixed with jaggery or sugar and also cocoanut. Then till evening dancing and merry-making are ceaselessly indulged in.

796 "The husband population are inexcusably required to be
[586] present in the wives' houses before evening as they are bound to do on the Onam and Vishu occasions; failure to do which is looked upon as a step or rather the first step on the part of the defaulting husband towards a final separation or divorce from the
[132] wife. Despite the rigour of the bleak December season during which commonly the festival falls, heightened inevitably by the
[515] constant blowing of the cold east wind upon their moistened frames, these lusty maidens derive considerable pleasure from their early baths and their frolics in water. The biting cold of

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* A swing made of bamboo.

the season which makes their persons shiver and quiver like 796
aspen-leaves before the breeze, becomes to them in the midst of [515]
all their ecstatic frolics an additional source of pleasure. In
short, all these merely tend to brace them up to an extent the
like of which they can scarcely find anywhere else.

"The two items described above, viz., the swinging process
and the beating on the water, have each its own distinctive significance.
The former typifies the attempt which these maidens [776]
make in order to hang themselves on these instruments and
destroy their lives in consequence of the lamented demise of
their sexual deity, Kamadevan. It is but natural that depth of
sorrow will lead men to extreme courses of action. The beating
on the water symbolizes their beating their chests in expression
of their deep-felt sorrow caused by their Cupid's death. Such
in brief is the description of a Nair festival which plays a
conspicuous part in the social history of Malabar."

Mr. Gopal Pannikar's chapter on "Local Traditions 776
and Superstitions" ("Malabar and its Folk") has special
value, for in it he recounts existing popular belief. He
tells us that to demon labourers are attributed the existence
of old dilapidated wells and buildings, demons who
perform Herculean tasks under orders of a chief. One
day these demons having finished their task disturbed
their chief when he was playing a game of chess, coming
to ask for more work, so he told them to count the waves
of the sea; and this is why they are still at work. He [825]
tells us why the crow has a long life and the fowl a short
one, and how that the former has but one eye, rolling in
a socket; how it is that the common squirrel is marked
on the back by the fingers of Vishnu; and much that is
of interest about the screech owl, the lizard, the crocodile,
and many other things. He recalls to my mind the [777]
popular belief accounting for the unluckiness which will
follow should one see the moon on the Chadûrti night, [821]
which I have heard in North Malabar. My note was
somehow mislaid. It is that the big-bellied god Ganapati 776
was once upon a time returning home in the moonlight 821
after a repast so generous that his person was much
distended, and unable to see his feet, he tripped and
stumbled. He looked around to see whether any one had
observed his discomfiture. There was no one but the
moon. The moon laughed, whereupon he cursed the
moon. Hence the belief that whoever sees the moon on
that night will be unlucky, probably defamed. Mr. Gopal [184]
Panniker, a native of South Malabar, does not mention
it, but in North Malabar women are scrupulously careful
not to see the moon or be for a moment in the moonlight

776
821 during that night for fear of calumny. There, the men
do not care much. We will now bid adieu to Mr. Gopal
[184] Pannikar, but not without thanking him for all he has
told us about his own people.

Uchâl (Uchaval) is the term used for the first three
241 days of the Malayalam month Makaram, usually falling
between the 15th and 20th January. All over Malabar,
[243] with the exception of Wynâd, above the ghâts, there are
two crops of rice every year, one with the south-west, one
[132] with the north-east monsoon. Elsewhere in Southern
India rice land is always irrigated, but in Malabar there
[776] is no such thing, practically, as irrigation, the heavy
rainfall rendering it unnecessary, and the earth goddess—Bhûmi Dêvi—brings forth her fruit under the stimulus of the rain from heaven. She produces the crops as a female produces her children, and from the 1st of the month Makaram, she rests until the cultivator again begins to disturb her, three months later, when the showers preceding the south-west monsoon fall. Uchâl is the period of three days when the earth goddess menstruates. Granaries and all receptacles of grain are closed during Uchâl—they are not even visited. Paddy is not sold. No implement of cultivation is touched. The rice to be used during the three days is pounded out beforehand and kept separate. But it is no season of gloom;
241 rather is it one of festivity. As particular forms of food
252 partaken on specific occasions have an interest of their
own, we must not omit description of the Uchâl cake—
262 the Pâla Ata. (Pâla—spathe of the areca-palm, Ata—cake). A paste is made of rice flour and water and spread thickly (about an inch thick) on one side of two pieces of the spathe of the areca-palm, each piece being from 2 to 3 feet in length and about 8 inches wide. Powdered jaggery, scraped cocoanut, powdered ginger, a little garlic and other condiments, are then put in small quantities on the paste. The two pieces of the spathe are then placed together, and they are stitched all round the edges. The whole is covered over with soft red mud and put into a fire where it is kept until the mud covering cracks. The cake is then cooked and ready for eating. It is cut and distributed to members of the family and friends.

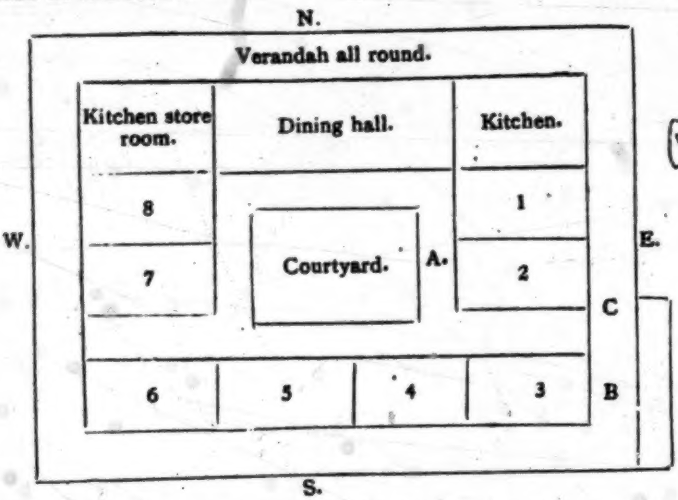
564 In parts of Malabar the Tîyan tenants present these
262 cakes to their Nâyar landlords as a token of allegiance
or submission. Rice is the only article of food which if
466 prepared by a Tîyan the Nâyar cannot eat; so the Nâyar
241 has no caste scruples about eating the Pâla Ata prepared

564

for him by the Tîyan at Uchâl. I recollect a case of 262
murder which arose out of nothing more or less than a 466
Tîyan tenant's refusal to present his Nâyar landlord with 241
a Pâla Ata at Uchâl. I once tried to preserve one of these cakes, but the results were too disastrous for description.*

HABITATIONS.

A house may face east or west; never north or south. 342
As a rule the Nâyar's house faces the east. Every [351]
garden is enclosed by a bank, a hedge, or a fencing of some kind, and entrance is to be made at one point only, the east, where there is a gate-house, or, as in the case of the poorest houses a small portico, or open doorway roofed over. One never walks straight through this; there is always a kind of stile to surmount. It is the same everywhere in Malabar, and not only amongst the
Nâyars. The following is a plan of a nâlupura or four- 342
sided house, which may be taken as representative of the 556
houses of the rich:



[778]

Numbers 6 and 7 are rooms which are used generally for storing grain.

At A is a staircase leading to the room of the upper story occupied by the female members of the family. At B is a staircase to the rooms of the upper story

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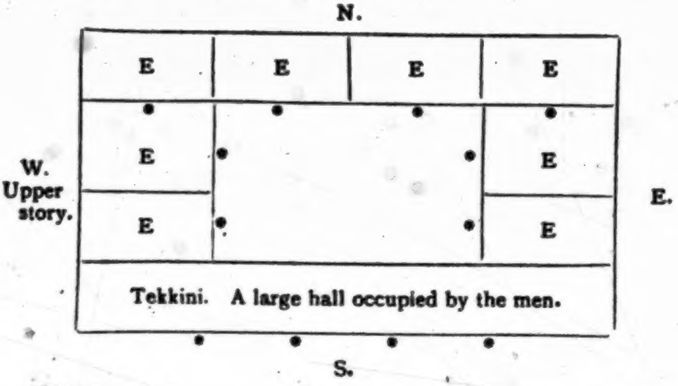
*For much of the information regarding Uchâl I am indebted to Mr. M. Raman Menon. [115]

342
556 occupied by the male members. There is no connection
between the portions allotted to the men and that of the
[769] women. No. 8 is for the family gods. The Kârnavans
[778] and old women of the family are perpetuated in images
of gold or silver, or, more commonly, brass. Poor people,
[735] who cannot afford to make these images, substitute
simply a stone. Offerings are made to these images (or
[782] to the stones) at every full moon. The throat of a fowl
will be cut outside, and the bird is then taken inside
and offered.

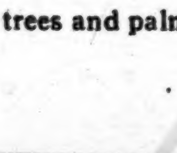
The entrance is at C.



Windows at • • • •

E. Rooms occupied by women and children.

It may be noticed that the apartment, where the men
sleep, has no windows on the side of the house which is
occupied by the women. The latter are relatively free
from control by the men as to who may visit them. We
saw, when speaking of funeral ceremonies, that a house
was supposed to have a central courtyard; and of course
it has this only when there are four sides to the house.
The nâlupura, or four-sided house, is the proper one for
in this alone can all ceremonial be observed in orthodox
342 fashion. But it is not the ordinary Nâyar's house that
one sees all over Malabar. The ordinary
house is, roughly, of the shape here indicated.
Invariably there is an upper story.
There are no doors but only a few tiny
windows opening to the west. Men sleep
in one end, women in the other, each
[351] having their own staircase. Around the
house there is always shade from many
trees and palms. Every house is in its own seclusion.



ASTROLOGY, MAGIC,* WITCHCRAFT.

Astrology.—The ordinary astrologer of Malabar is a man of the Kanisan or Panikkar † caste, a community relatively low in the social scale, therefore carrying pollution to those of the higher caste. A curious position in society for people of a learned profession to occupy. The Panikkar is also, very often, the schoolmaster. He is in request in connection with every social function, religious or other, and of course, at every birth. His astrology, he will tell you, is divided into three parts: 791 564 [875]

(1) Ganita, which treats of the constellations;
(2) Samkita, which explains the origin of the constellations, comets, falling stars, earthquakes;
(3) Hôra, by which the fate of man is explained. [787]

The Panikkar, who follows in the foot-steps of his forefathers, should have a thorough knowledge of astrology and of mathematics, and be learned in the Vêdas. He should be sound in mind and body, truthful and patient. He should look well after his family, and he should worship regularly the nine planets:—Sûryan—the Sun; Chandran—Moon; Chovva—Mars; Bûdhan—Mercury; Vyâzham, or Guru, or Brihaspati—Jupiter; Sukran, or Sani—Venus; Râhu and Kêtu. The two last, though not visible, are, oddly enough, classed as planets by the Panikkar. They are said to be two parts of an Âsura who was cut in two by Vishnu. 791 564 821

I here reproduce a diagram made for me by a Panikkar showing the relative positions of the planets on the 7th of April 1895:

Sûryan, Bûdhan.	**Sukkran.**	**Chovva.**	**Brihaspati.**
Râhu.			
			Kêtu.
		Sani.	**Chandran.**

N.B.—Chandran remains 2¼ days in each of the 12 *rasis* or celestial chambers.

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[*] What was said under "Magic and sorcery" when describing Nambûtiri Brahmans, Bulletin, Vol. III, No. I, applies also to the Nâyar. [114] [553]

[†] This is not to be confounded with the honorific Panikkar affixed to the name of a Nâyar.

789 [791] The Panikkars dabble also in magic. In Plates XVI, XVII are figured four yantrams, selected from a number in my possession as representative, presented to me by a Panikkar. They should be written on a thin gold, silver or copper plate (a yantram written on gold is the most effective), and worn on the person. As a rule, the yantram is placed in a little cylindrical case made of silver, fastened to a string tied round the waist. Many of these are often worn by the same person. The yantram is sometimes written on cadjan or paper. I have one of this kind in my collection taken from the neck of a goat. It is common to see them worn on the arm, or round the neck.

No. I. Aksharamâla.—Fifty-one letters. Used in connection with every other yantram. Each letter has its own meaning, and does not represent any word. In itself this yantram is powerless; but it gives life to all others. It must be written on the same plate as the other yantram.

[782] *No. II. Sûlini.*—For protection against sorcery, or devils. This is to invoke the goddess and secure her aid. The ceremony brings a blessing to the receiver of the charm.

[776] *No. III. Mâha Sûlini.*—To be used to prevent all kinds of harm through devils, chief of whom is Pulatini—he who eats infants. May be used also as protective against enemies. Women wear it to avert miscarriage. The letter in the middle, Hûm Mâha Sûlini. That in the rim is Om.

[782] *No. IV. Kâla Bhâiravi.*—Represents the goddess. The goddess must be pleased *first* by worship. No sacrifice, which is rather odd, as this terrible goddess is generally represented in Southern India as loving blood. The letters do not form any mantram. Each letter has life in itself. Prevents all harm from enemies, and attack by devils.

Other yantrams to be used in much the same way as these are:—

[856] The *Ganapati* yantram. To increase knowledge. To put away fear and shyness.

The *Sarasvati* yantram. To enable its possessor to please his listeners, and increase his knowledge.

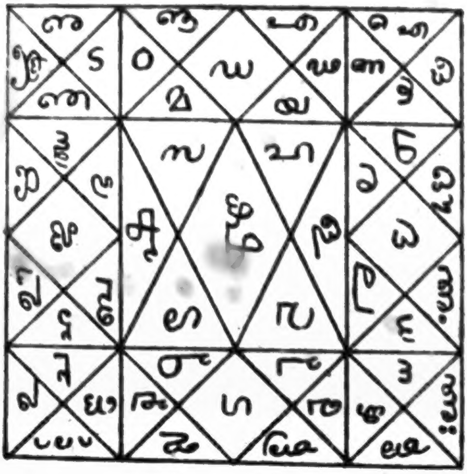
[776] The *Panchakshari* yantram, a square containing 81 smaller squares, in each a mystic letter; the whole representing Siva. For persons on whom medicines have no effect. Also against evil spirits. A person out of whom an evil spirit has been driven is perfectly safe ever after with this carried on his person.

6:Fawcett G-5 (ca. 1900)1915

AW11 Kerala AW11
Nayar

PL. XVI

789



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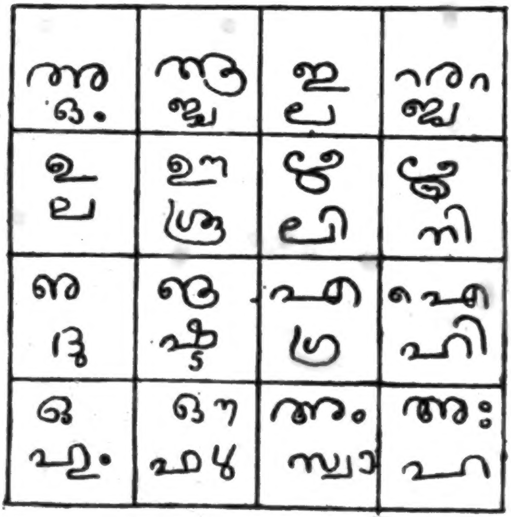
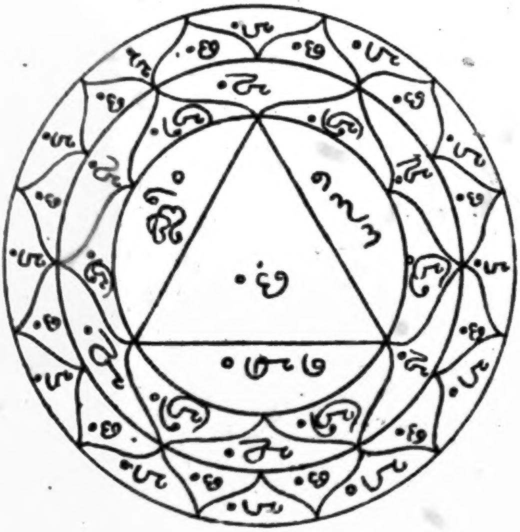


II

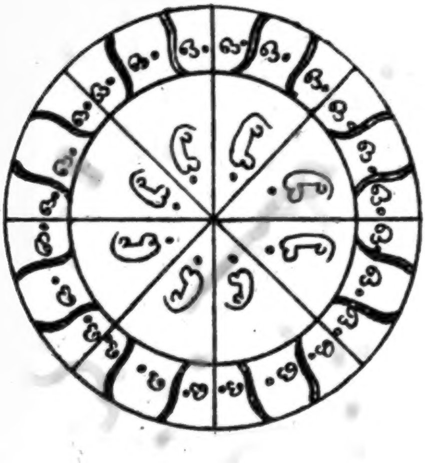
[facing P. 306, A]

PL. XVII

789



III



IV

No. 1425 & 26
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[facing p. 306, B]

Zinco., Survey Office, Madras.
1915

The *Santâna gópâlam* yantram. As a whole, it represents Sri Krishna. The letters in it (there are 101) put together in a certain way form a mantram. It is used by barren women so that they may bear children. It may be traced on a metal plate and worn in the usual way, or on a slab of butter which is then eaten. When the latter method is adopted it is repeated on 41 successive days, during which the woman as well as the Panikkar may not have sexual connection. 789 842 [834]

The *Sri Sûkra* yantram is another used by childless men and women in order to obtain offspring. The others are prophylactic against evil spirits (chiefly), to defeat enemies, to succeed in all undertakings and prevent loss of property by theft, to win over the good feeling of others, and so on. The *Sudarsana* yantram not only relieves sickness, but when drawn in 5 colours on the ground and worshipped while repeating a mantram (too long to quote) wards off the evil influence caused through black magic! Another, the *Navva* yantram, drawn in ashes of cowdung on a new cloth which is then tied round the waist, relieves a women in labour. Yet another, the *Asvârûdha* yantram (Asva, horse; ârûḍha, to climb) would also be useful to some people, as a person wearing it is able to cover long distances easily on horseback; and he may make the most refractory horse amenable by tying it round its neck. It will also help to cure sick cattle. In some the letters or syllables form a distinct mantram, while in others each has its own mystic meaning. 789 [755] [825]

Let me hasten to assure any one desirous of applying one of these charms to himself that they are entirely inoperative unless accompanied in the first place with the mystic rite which is the secret of the Panikkar.

Magic—The Evil Eye.—One day as I reached my camp in the Kôttayam taluk, North Malabar, my ears were assailed by the din of incessant drumming hard by. In the evening I was able to see and converse with the drummer, Châtu by name, aged 23, by caste Malayan. The Malayans are hereditary professional magicians, few in number, inferior in the social scale. They are not the only magicians. We have seen already (Bulletin, Volume III, No. 1, page 50) that some of the Nambûtiri Brahmans practise magic; but to the Malayan the Nâyar appears as often as to any other kind of mantram-man. 754 [791] [564]

Châtu was delightfully communicative. He had been putting away the effects of the evil eye from one of his clientèle;—hence the din. In effect he said: certain [115]

754 persons have the evil eye by nature. Potta Kannu, blind eye it is called. A person having the evil eye may, while *thinking evil*, infect man, woman or child by simply looking at them. Those who have the evil eye are generally women: men rarely. The cause is in the eye itself. No evil spirit is in any way connected with it. A woman may affect her own child. A person having the evil eye, looking at a beautiful or a healthy child, will affect it without intending to do so. The injury done through the eye is often unintentional. The power of the eye to do mischief is altogether beyond the volition of its possessor; but it is excessively virulent when mischief is really intended. Colour of the eye matters nothing. Nor is possession of the evil eye confined to [564] any caste. He knew a Nambûtiri who had it. The effect of it on a child is that it becomes lean, feverish, loses its well-favoured appearance, and cries in its sleep. Men and women suffer from headaches and pains in the limbs. Animals are disposed to lassitude and eat little. Cows will not give milk.

791 The Malayan drives away all these unpleasant ail- 755 ments by invoking an evil spirit Vuḍikandan by name: male, having no wife. By means of magic he *forces* [776] Vuḍikandan to do what he requires of him. But how? The process he would not tell. It is secret. That is, all but the drumming. No one outside the Malayan caste may be initiated into the fearsome mysteries. The spirit Vuḍikandan is used for no other rite. The Malayan also drives out evil spirits.

755 Châtu presented me with a mantram, a magic verse, [824] written with a style on a cadjan leaf, the common stationery of Malabar, and told me that whenever any [212] part of my person becomes affected by the evil eye, I should whisper the mantram over a piece of string and tie the string round my leg, or other limb or part of the body which suffers, and cure will take place instantaneously.

He works by day: never by night. A whole day is occupied in driving away injury through the evil eye in a bad case. He need not be starving; in fact has a good meal before he begins. The generous Châtu presented me also with a couple of mantrams such as would cure an easy case of harm through the evil eye, and explained their use.

[539] (1) "Ôm: Namo: Bhagavatôm Srîparamêsvaranûm Srî Pârvati yum Pallivêṭa Nâyaṭinnâl Ezhunellumpôl Srî

Pârvati kê kannêru dôsam undâî Srî Paramêsvaran Srî 755
Pârvati ute kannêru dôsem Tîrtâtu pôlê Tîrnupôka Svâmi 539
en guruvînâna."

(I prostrate myself to Bhagavati. When Sri Paramesvaran and Srî Parvati went hunting, Srî Parvati was under the influence of the evil eye; Srî Paramêsvaran then put away this influence. I swear by my guru.)

(2) "Ôm Pêpûti Vôrrûpôti Yerrîkâ Swâhâ Yên Guru Vinâna."

The meaning of this is not clear. "Ôm"=I. "Yerrîka"=burnt. "Swâhâ" (used as a verb)=devour. "Guru Vînâna"=by the guru or teâcher. But in mantrams the word guru invariably means the deity.

Mantram (1) is whispered on sixteen grains of rice: 755
on each grain separately, not on all together. As the mantram is whispered on each grain, the grain is placed in oil. When the sixteen grains have been placed thus in the oil, it is stirred while the mantram (2) is repeated sixteen times. The magician then hands this oil in silence to the person who has been injured by the evil eye. The person receives it also in silence, and rubs it over his head. No word is spoken until he has finished.

Fear of harm from the evil eye is very general. At 754
the corner of the upper story of almost every Nâyar house 789
near a road or path is suspended some object, often a doll-like hideous figure, on which may rest the eye of the passer by. And of course in every field some object is erected for the same purpose.

Magic such as is practised by the Malayan, or the
Panikkar, is quite fair and above-board. It is, as a rule,
all for good: never for harm. Nearly every misfortune, [777]
bodily ill or ailment, and even death is caused by some
malignant spirit or through its agency, and the warlock [753]
has business everywhere relieving people from their
oppression. I feel perfectly safe in saying that every [761]
Nâyar believes in magic through and through. No matter what his collegiate course has been, no matter how full of knowledge such as the West can give him, no matter how thrilled he may be by the higher Hinduism which condemns it altogether, he believes in magic as the cause of ills, and he believes in magic for removal of these. It is the last resource always, and the most powerful means in the hands of man. What are medicines, what is all our western science compared to it! The Nâyar will not, I trust, be offended by these remarks, which after all mean nothing more than that he

754 789 is truly human. Belief in magic and witchcraft, symbolic
hurts and cures, and the like, are very deep in human
nature; reason and culture do not efface it. It is one of
the earliest heirlooms of the human family, and it will in
all probability persist to the end. We cannot think of
man as being without it.* Hence the interest in investigating it.

791 But now, as Patelin's Judge said to the draper, let
us return *à nos moutons*. There is nothing secret about
the profession of the Panikkar. His rites are secret of
course. They are *his* secret. But his profession is an
honourable one. He is not ashamed of it, nor will he
deny it. That is, so long as he confines his talents to the
practice of *good* magic.

754 With the professor of the more lucrative *black magic*,
it is quite another thing. No one will ever admit
publicly that he practises *black magic*.

Black magic.—It would never do to avoid altogether
the subject of black magic, which is cultivated and
practised to a much greater extent in Malabar than elsewhere
in the Southern Presidency. I hope to have more
to say about it later on when we come to description
of some of the lower races, and for the present we must
be content with a rather bare description of it. We
have seen already that a few Nambûtiri Brahmans
practise it. A few Nâyars also do so. But as a rule the
man who really works in black magic is the Parayan.
754 The old story. It is always the man of inferior race who
564 is superior in black magic. The Parayans of Malabar
are not, I think, identical with the Pariahs (Parayas) of
Southern India. There are obvious differences in
physique. In parts of rural Malabar one may see a
Parayan's little hut far away on the hill side, but one
tries in vain to see and speak to its inmates, who flee
into the jungle. The Parayans are complete outcastes,
and their presence carries pollution to one of
any superior caste within about a furlong. It is not
too much to say that, as a rule, they are abhorred as
the lowest of the low. They eat beef, and are there-
[262] fore quite outside the pale of Hinduism. I have
heard of fairly well authenticated cases of their stealing
[673] children of Nâyars, hiding them away in the forest and

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[171] * The reader who has not given much attention to the subject of
Folklore, may be surprised by the evidence of the persistence of these
beliefs in England, available in the publications of the Folklore Society,
London. See "County Folklore," chapters on Witchcraft, etc.

bringing them up as their own. The belief that they will 754
steal children helps to some extent to make them dreaded 564
as well as abhorred, but it is as skilled professors of [673]
black magic that they are really feared. Ôḍi is the name
of the cult, and those who follow it, Parayans as a rule, 754
are able to do many wonderful things. The ordeals to 564
be gone through by the apprentice in the Ôḍi cult are 795
rather trying. Some are so utterly filthy and abominable, eating human excreta being a detail, that even amongst the Parayans, themselves dirty to a degree and accustomed to anything but a high class diet, very few are able to undergo them. Many try, and are unable to proceed. But the man who has gone through them all is a terror. He can make himself invisible, and he can turn himself at will into any animal in order to accomplish his desires. There occurs now and then the death of a woman—a Nâyar or other—enceinte for the first time, the fœtus having been removed for use in black magic.*

The Parayan magician, or Ôḍiyan as he is sometimes 754
called, being a pastmaster in Ôḍi, is credited with power to render himself invisible, using such a fœtus; and even without it, he may force a woman to leave her house at midnight and meet him. There would seem to be some connection, however obscure, with hypnotism and this latter. The Parayan, who turns himself into a bullock, in such guise, circumambulates a house thrice; then, still by means of magic, he compels a certain woman of the household to come out to him. If we follow up popular belief, we find that the Nâyar woman so drawn out of her house is bound to die within three days. But as it is well in a description of this kind, to proceed by illustration when possible, I will quote an authenticated story of a woman having been compelled to leave her house by night. The "walking the dæsil" by the bullock, one of those imaginative performances difficult to account for in human belief, must be left out of the story as no one is said to have seen it.

A Nâyar noticed that, for some days, his wife, who was (contrary to the usual custom, as we have seen it to be) living in his house, appeared to be under some occult influence; and under a premonition that something was

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* Not very long ago there was a case of this kind, not far from Palghat, and not only was the fœtus removed but a wisp of straw was substituted in its place; apparently with an idea that, if the space were filled up somehow, the wretched woman would not die!

754 going to happen he slept across the doorway, so that she could not without waking him leave the house. The door was closed and fastened, he sleeping *inside.* In the early hours of the morning he awoke, and, fearing something unpleasant had taken place as the door was open, he called his brother who was sleeping upstairs. Together they searched for the woman, and found her lying outside in the yard, unconscious. When she recovered her senses, she said that for some nights previous she felt as if she was being called outside, and she tried hard to resist the impulse to go out of the house into the night. At last she could resist no longer and, altogether against her will, unfastened the door and went out. What happened then she knew not. There was neither removal of a fœtus nor death in this case. Such is the story. It is quite possible that stories of the kind are inculcated by wary husbands to keep the women indoors and prevent their being crowned with horns. At any rate the story is one of the kind such as every Nâyar [364] believes. It is, I may say, quite plainly to be seen that, when the Nâyar constructs his house, he takes care that there are certain conveniences, so that the women need never leave the house at night. My narrator was a native gentleman in a position of authority, living at the scene of this strange story when the events related in it occurred not long ago. The persons were named, but I did not question them, as there is much objection to speak of such things to a stranger.

754 795 564 *The Ôḍi cult.*—The Parayan adepts in the magic Ôḍi cult are to some extent hereditary functionaries.* They form one of those hierarchies, common enough in this country, of which Europeans know so little; of which the people themselves know but little as nothing connected with them or with their system is written. It is custom pure and simple—custom which is the most difficult of all to approach and define within accuracy. We will put down what is known, in the way of popular belief of course, as may be free from error.

Those who belong to it, born into it so to speak, go through a certain novitiate, not easy; but those who wish to join it from outside the fraternity of the cult are required to *prove* themselves worthy to join it; and it is their trials as novices, terrifying and utterly filthy, which

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* For much of this which follows I am indebted to Mr. U. Balakrishna Nâyar, who has kindly obtained for me matter which is in a general way, unobtainable to the European.

are truly difficult. Members of the brotherhood are 754
bound to secrecy by solemn oaths, and the secrets of 795
their craft are not allowed lightly to pass to any out- 564
sider. A member of the brotherhood may have one or more disciples or apprentices who are in the first place bound to strict obedience. These apprentices fill vacancies in the brotherhood.

He who would be a member of the Ôḍi cult falls at the feet of him whom he would have as master, and begs for initiation into the mysteries. The master tries to dissuade him, but the would-be Ôḍiyan persists; and then, when assent is given, comes the trial. He follows his master to a lonely place by night. The master disappears in mist, and then re-appears as some terrible beast, now standing still, now rushing furiously towards the novice as if to tear him in pieces. If he stands still and unperturbed the novice is considered to have fulfilled *that* test. He is then required to pass the night alone in the forest, which he is made to believe is peopled with strange beings howling horribly. When he has satisfied the master that he is not afraid, he is subjected to other tests, and he is eventually accepted as a novice. He is introduced formally to the brotherhood on a certain selected day, when, having invited them to a feast, pûja is made to the dread spirit worshipped by them—Nîli of Kallaḍikôd or Kallaḍikôd Nîli, as she is called (Kallaḍikôd is the *place* name), through whose aid the Ôḍiyan works his devilment. Flesh and liquor are consumed, and the novice is taught how to procure the magical *Pilla thilum* (infant oil).

The principal ingredient to be used in preparing this is a fœtus of some 6 or 7 months' growth. The Ôḍiyan fixes his eye on some woman, who may be of any caste other than his own, in her first pregnancy. Then, on a selected day, usually a Friday, he proceeds to her house at midnight, provided, that is, he meets with no inauspicious omen on the way. I am not sure what omens are
auspicious or the contrary; but at any rate the Ôḍiyan [787]
returns home should he meet with an omen which is unfavourable, and starts out again some other night. Transforming himself into a dog, a bullock, a cat or some other quadruped, he walks thrice round the house, shaking vigorously a cocoanut-shell containing *gurusi*, a compound of turmeric water, lime and other substances, the colour of which is red. The woman whose appearance is desired comes out. She cannot help herself. If locked in she bangs her head against the wall, and yells

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795 until she is allowed to go out. Once out, she rushes like
564 a mad thing into the arms of the Ôḍiyan. He takes her by the hand and leads her to the courtyard or outside it. At once she is stripped naked. The choru kindi (blood—vessel: the shell) being placed near it, the womb expands, and the fœtus is easily removed in a moment.
[824] A few leaves of the mailôsika plant (Polycarpæa spadicea[*]) are placed as was the other instrument of magic, and the womb contracts to the normal dimensions.

No wonder the Ôḍiyan is feared. By means of this *pilla thilum* he may render himself invisible; in fact he is able to do anything, according to popular belief.

SPIRITS, EVIL AND BENEFICENT, HOW SUBDUED.[†]

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789 A regular working magician tells us something more of these. The most important of the evil spirits (Dûr murti) are—

- Karinkutti.
- Kuttichchâttan (we have met him before).
- Mâranakutti.
- Kallâti mûttam.
- Parakkutti.
- Ôḍikkutti.
- Kuttu bhâiravan.
- Bhâiravan.
- Vanni bhâiravan.
- Chotâla bhadra kâli.
- Dûmapati.
- Narasihmamûrti.
- Kâla bhâiravan.
- Ôḍi bhâiravan.

Nearly every man, woman and child in Malabar wears some protective charm against evil spirits. Such charms are also very commonly tied round the necks of cattle, goats and even dogs.

Here follows the recipe for subjection of the spirit Karinkutti into one's service. Of course each spirit is treated always in a totally different way. First you bury a dead black or reddish buffalo. You must not catch your buffalo and kill him. You must find him dead. If you say this is far from easy, I can only remark that the subjection of an evil spirit is not an easy matter. Having buried your buffalo—assuming for the moment that you are a magician, such as the instructions are intended for—you bathe, and while your cloths are wet and clinging to your body, draw the figure chakram, which corresponds to a magic circle, on the ground over the buried buffalo. The

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[*] I am not sure that the correct name is here given for this plant. It may be Alpinia Allughas, the aromatic rhizomes of which are used by natives medicinally.

[†] For this note, too, I thank Mr. Balakrishna Nâyar.

ground is then plastered over with cowdung. Then you 776
mark out with rice flour an eight-cornered chakram, in the 789
centre of which you place a small piece of cadjan leaf, and you place a similar piece at four corners. You sit with your back to the chakram, facing eastwards in the morning and westwards in the evening while performing pûja. This pûja is, I think, addressed to Karinkutti: not in any way to the sun God who is not then visible. For the pûja you must be supplied with fried grain, beaten rice, rice bran, a fowl, toddy, arrack, some flowers of three colours—one of them the tulsi *(Ocimum sanctum)*—sandalwood-paste, camphor, incense. (Note the use of the sacred tulsi in this diabolical incantation!) While the pûja, which I am unfortunately unable to describe (leaving my directions rather lame) is being performed the mûla mantram of Karinkutti is to be repeated 101 times.

In order to do all this you must bathe 7½ nazhikas (about 2¾ hours) before dawn, and complete the pûja before dawn arrives. But even before this you must stand up to your chest in water and repeat the mûla mantram 101 times. And you must repeat the whole thing *da capo* in the evening. The mantram is thus repeated 404 times in the day. You are not done yet, in fact this is only the beginning. The whole thing is done every day for 21 consecutive days; and then you will have the evil spirit Karinkutti entirely at your disposal. The person who remains continent, eats but once a day, cooking his own food, may it is said bring the spirit into obedience in less than 21 days.

Subjection of Vanni Bhâiravan is a much more difficult matter, involving much more elaborate ceremonial, details of which may well be spared the reader as the example which has been given is quite adequate.

And the good spirits—

Bhagavati.
Bbadra kâli.
Hanumân.
Ganapati.
Subrahmanyan.

Mûkâmi.
Vîrabhadran.
Móhini.
Sarabha Mûrti.

The evil and the good spirits are truly a strange collection of beings! Their names help to illustrate what has [771]
been said already, that the Hinduism of the west coast is a strange medley of the higher Hinduism with the lower
cult of the country. Bhâirava or Kâla Bhâirava (Bhâira- 771
van of the Telugu country) is elsewhere the object of 795
adoration of what is almost a distinct cult, a kind of 776

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795
776 mixture of Hinduism with Buddhism,—the kâpâlika religion or cult, the novice in which is "taught how to worship Bhaîri dêvam (Kâla Bhâirava) with human blood, by human sacrifice, by drinking liquor from a Brâhman's skull, and by wearing wooden earrings called Kâmâkshi kundala, symbols of the female principle." * The licentious portion of the programme I will leave out, as we can but glance at the Bhâiravan of other parts of Southern India. There, Bhâirava, or by whatever equivalent he may be called, is a male entity; in Malabar, where sex in deities is not of very much moment, Bhâirava is female. Bhadra Kâli, and even Vishnu under another name, is dragged into the category of evil spirits!

776 The first five of the good spirits are of course, well known. It is odd to find the terrible Bhadra Kâli bracketed with the genial Ganapati and reckoned as a good spirit. Some of the others are local spirits though rated along with emanations of Hinduism.

789 A point to be noticed here is that the magic which has been described is of that kind which is intimately connected with religion, in that the aid of spiritual beings is sought, and mischief is wrought by their means.

But there is, of course, another side of magic; the sympathetic, which deals in symbolic hurts and cures; of quite another character, being nothing more than a "misdevelopment of natural philosophy."

These divisions of magic, though tolerably distinct, are not therefore always separated. They are sometimes blended.

212
789 It was my good fortune, not very long ago, to acquire possession of a couple of grandhas, or palm leaf books, the subject of which is ordinary magic and black magic. Like all works of the kind (these are in the Malayalam character) they are written in such a manner as to be quite unintelligible to the ordinary reader. Letters, symbols, syllables belonging to no known word are employed to express occult meaning. In fact it is more a memorandum than anything else. One of the grandhas is so obscure that translation of it is next to hopeless, for the few who can do so are altogether unwilling to help one to decipher it. The other is composed of Sanscrit and Malayalam words, spelled abominably; but though relatively clear for a book out of a "Mantravâdis" (Warlock's Magicians) library, it, too, contains many blank spaces which can only be filled up by the professional dealer in

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[113] * From an article by the writer in the "Journal of the Anthropological Society of Bombay," Vol. I, No. 7, 1889.

magic. Fortunately, by the kindness of Mr. U. Bala- 789
krishnan Nâyar, these blanks have been filled up in the 212
translation which he has obtained for me—from *one who knows.*

I will give here an excerpt from it, which is fairly 754
representative of the sympathetic side of magic such as 212
is common in Malabar. It is not, I think, concerned with sympathetic or symbolic magic exclusively, as, unless I am much mistaken, an evil spirit is here also invoked. It is within the domain of black magic, in which, I think, an evil spirit is always made to help if not to work the evil.

It describes how to cause certain pains in the body of another. A mantram is written (here, I think, an evil spirit is called up, though such does not appear to be said), on the stem of the kâitha plant. The stem should be the length of eight fingers. A figure representing the person to be injured is (also) drawn on the stem. A hole is bored to represent the navel. The mantram is repeated, and at each repetition a certain thorn (kâra mollu) is fixed into the limbs of the figure. The name of the person and of the star under which he was born are written on a piece of cadjan leaf, which is stuck into the hole representing the navel. The thorns are stuck in 21 times; that is, removed and replaced 21 times. Two magic circles are drawn below the nipple on the figure. The stem is then hung up in the smoke of the kitchen. A pot of toddy and some other accessories are procured, and with these certain rites are performed by the warlock. When he has concluded them, he moves three steps backwards. He shouts aloud thrice, fixing in again the thorns, thinking all the while of the particular mischief with which he would afflict the person to be injured.

When all this has been done, the person whose figure has been drawn on the stem and pricked with thorns, feels pain as if *he* were being pricked with thorns.

The grandha describes also how an enemy may be stuck dumb. The head of a dark coloured fowl is cut off. The head is then split, and a piece of cadjan on which [825]
are written a mantram, the name of the person to be injured, and the name of the star under which he was born, is stuck into the split head which is then sewn up, taking care to stitch the tongue to the beak. The head is then inserted in a certain fruit, which, after being tied up with a withe of a certain creeper nine spans in length, is deposited under the enemy's gateway.

In it, too, we are told how to win over a man, or a quarrelsome husband; how to quiet refractory cows which

754 object to be milked; how to cure a headache; to prevent
812 bad dreams, and so on.

N.B.—A mantram must be spoken, breathed, whispered with extreme accuracy. There must be no omission or false accent. Anything of the kind, or wrong pronunciation, destroys its efficacy at once.

FAMOUS MAGICIANS OF MALABAR.

791 We will close this chapter on magic which, though painfully inadequate, is already rather too long for its purpose, by mention of some of the famous workers in the art. Those who are familiar with the west coast will at once recall to mind the names of three Brâhman families whose scions are famed throughout the land as possessors of stores of magic, and at the same time—so interwoven is magic with religion!—revered for their saintliness. The eldest member of one of these is said to be "an honoured guest throughout the length and breadth of Kêrala; and on certain State occasions in Trevandrum and elsewhere, his presence is indispensable." A well-known tradition relates how that magic came, so to speak, into the family. (It is not necessary to give the family name, even though it is a household word on the west coast).

773 Long ago in the days of the Perumals, a Brâhman and
his friend were belated in the Yakshi paramba (*yakshi*—
791 female demon, *paramba*—garden) near Trichur.* The
776 place was dreary; nothing but palms around. Suddenly
they were accosted by lovely damsels who asked them to pass the night under their roof, and soon they were lodged in a sumptuous house, each in a separate chamber. But in the night, the damsels who had, *Lorelei* fashion, attracted the travellers, resumed their demoniacal forms and ate the Brâhman. His friend they could not touch as he had on his person a grandha sacred to Bhagavati; but in the morning he found himself perched on the top of a palm tree underneath which lay the bones of his friend, the Brâhman.

The Brahman's widow gave birth to a son soon after the strange death of her husband. When the boy was eleven years of age, she related to him how he had been made fatherless. He vowed vengeance on the Yakshis and Gandharvas (male demons) and, like a sensible boy, set about preparation for his life-task. It was not long before he had mastered the Vedas and all learning, and having done so he retired to the jungle, where he was

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* To this day people avoid this place at night.

engaged in prayer and meditation for seven years. His 773
devotion so pleased Surya, the sun god, that he appeared 791
before him in human form and handed him a grandah, 776
which is to this day the greatest work on magic in [553]
existence. The kind attention of the sun god accounts
for the prefix "Sûrya" to the family name.

Now well equipped, he made war on the Yakshis and Gandharvas, and compelled the Yakshi who had devoured his father to appear before him. She begged for mercy, offering to serve him faithfully. But he would have none of her and made her enter the sacrificial fire, and she was consumed. Then her Gandharva lover turned up, most inconveniently, and cursed the Brahman magician to suffer death on the forty-first following day. It was now the magician's turn to beg for mercy, and the Gandharva, more merciful than the Brahman had been to the Yakshi, extended it to him. On one condition, however, that on the forty-first day he would worship at the Alangât Tiruvalore temple in expiation. Naturally, he went to fulfil it, and preparatory to worshipping, descended into the temple tank to bathe. All at once he was seized with delirium and raved like a maniac, biting the wooden beams of the bathing shed. He died after enduring frightful agonies. The marks of his teeth are to be seen to this day! Moral—Don't meddle with magic.

Another famous magician was by caste a Ravuthan
(a class of Tamil Muhammadans of which there are a
few on the west coast) who died about 30 years ago.
The story is that having been turned out of his father's
house, he was in sad plight, when, awaking from sleep
under a tree, a white-bearded Rishi * confronted him
and presented him with a grandha of magic, which he
put to such good use that he died a very wealthy man.
Here are two authenticated stories from the families of 791
Nâyars of good position whom he assisted in each case. 789

(1) A Nâyar lady, having lost several children in
infancy, sought the magician. He came to her house, 842
and asked for a common mud pot, a fowl, some rice and
some pepper. With what formality is not said, but the
fowl (alive ?), the rice and the pepper were put into the
pot, which was buried in the ground under the lady's cot.
Every day, she ate some of the rice and pepper, and in
due time produced a daughter who is now living.

(2) Nearly every young Nâyar woman wears a talis- 791
man, protective against evil spirits. The Ravuthan 789
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* It is rather comical, a Rishi appearing to a Muhammadan! Again the queer mixture of religious ideas.

789 791 magician was called in to prepare one of these. Placing
an ordinary style and a small sheet of copper in a box,
he closed it. Presently a noise was heard inside the
box; and in a few moments a sound as of the style
falling. The box was opened and magic figures were
found to be inscribed on the copper sheet. The lady
wears the talisman now! The magician must have been
in a favourable mood on the occasion, as he is said to
have given an additional performance on his own
account. When he had placed the style and the tiny
sheet of copper in the box, taking two young cocoanuts
in his hands, he kept on throwing them in the air and
catching them. "What will you have in each?" he
asked. "Honey in one and boiled milk in the other"
was the answer. Of course these were found in the
cocoanuts when they were opened by the magician, but
it was somewhat gross of the Nâyar gentleman to test
the quality of the milk by turning it into curds the next
[493] day. Wonderful stories are told of this man who used
to be seen at night carried in a mancheel by invisible
bearers, whose weary chant could be heard, but whose
bodily presence was beyond the reach of human eye.

791 The last and the chief of this trio is the once famous
Kandeth Nayar who departed this life about a hundred
[782] years ago. Every one knows about the Kandeth Nayar,
and any one now-a-days who wants to injure another
invokes his aid, and resorts to his tomb to fulfil his vow.
I understand that sacrifices at his tomb are common, and
that his power reaches from the land of shades in almost
the same strength as when he lived.

791 The rather incoherent way in which the terms
754 warlock, magician, have been used seems to demand
some explanation. Strictly speaking, the Parayan
Ôḍiyan is the only warlock. Magician is scarcely the
correct term for the ordinary worker in magic. Nevertheless,
it is scarcely possible to avoid a somewhat
indiscriminate use of these terms on account of the way
in which the functions of the warlock, the magician, the
astrologer, and even the priest are really interwoven one
with the other. The professed magician is often also
the warlock and *vice versâ*. The vernacular word, which
is as catholic as that which stands for "Religion," is
"mantravâḍi"—mantram man; he who is sought every
day of the year by hundreds of the people of Kêrala, to
relieve them of their physical troubles and infirmities, to
cure their cattle, to injure their enemies, aye, even to
destroy them.

APPENDIX A.

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The account of the funeral ceremonies which has been given is not, of course, full and accurate as regards all the clans; but it is precise as regards one, and suffices for the present to give a clear idea of the ceremonies as performed by all. There are many interesting features in the ceremonies as performed by the Kiriattil clan. Want of space forbids more than the briefest mention of some of these.

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Those who carry the corpse to the pyre are dressed as women, their cloths being wet, and each carries a knife on his person. Two junior male members of the Taravâd thrust pieces of mango wood into the southern end of the burning pyre, and, when they are well lighted, throw them over their shoulders to the southwards without looking round. Close to the northern end of the pyre two small sticks are fixed in the ground, and tied together with a cloth, over which water is poured thrice. All members of the Taravâd prostrate to the ground before the pyre. They follow the Enangru carrying the pot of water round the pyre, and go home without looking round.

They pass to the northern side of the house under an arch made by two men, standing east and west, holding at arms length, and touching at the points, the spade that was used to dig the pit under the pyre, and the axe with which the wood for the pyre was cut or felled.

After this is done the "kodali karma" ceremony, using the spade, the axe and a big knife. These are placed on the leaves where the corpse had lain. Then follows circumambulation and prostration by all; and the leaves are committed to the burning pyre.

APPENDIX B.

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[127] At the last moment I have received from Dr. E. Hultzsch, Ph.D., the Government Epigraphist, the following excerpt from the number of the *Epigraphia Indica* which is now under publication, and which with his permission I add to this monograph. It is interesting evidence of the old martial spirit of the Nayars :—

"According to an inscription of the 14th year of his reign (=A.D. 1083–84) the Chola King Kulôttuṅga I. 'conquered Kuḍamalai-nâḍu, *i.e.*, the Western hill country (Malabar), whose warriors, the ancestors of the Nayars of the present day, perished to the last man in defending their independence.'—*South-Indian Inscriptions*, Vol. III, p. 130.

TRANSLATION OF AN INSCRIPTION OF THE 14TH YEAR OF KULÔTTUNGA I. AT TIRUKKAḺUKKUṈRAM.

Line 27.—'While all the heroes[1] in the Western hill-country (Kuḍamalai-nâḍu) ascended voluntarily to heaven,' etc.—*South Indian Inscriptions*, Vol. III, p. 147.

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[192] [1] In Malayâlam *châvér* (Tamil *sâveru*) means 'one who has elected to die, *moriturus*.'

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/For anthropomorphic differences between various subdivisions of the Nayar caste (called clans by the author), and for similarities and differences in ornamentation, see category 116, pp. 191-224./